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ABSTRACT

The Kent Free Library (Ohio) evolved from the Great Atlantic and Western Railroad Reading Room of 1875, into a municipal Carnegie library, and then grew to be a medium-sized public school district library, in the city of Kent, Ohio. Its original building has been enlarged through three separate expansion campaigns, in order to have space to house its ever-increasing collection, to provide meeting rooms for community groups, and to best serve its increasing numbers of users, both citizens and university students. This study chronicles the many changes that have occurred in the library's collection, budget, staff, services, and physical facility from 1958 to 1992. (Contains 9 references.) (Author)

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A HISTORY OF THE KENT FREE LIBRARY, KENT, OHIO 1958-1992

A Master's Research Paper submitted to the
Kent State University School of Library and Information Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Master of Library Science

by

Christina D. Getrost

August, 1993

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ABSTRACT

The Kent Free Library evolved from the Great Atlantic and Western Railroad Reading Room of 1875, into a municipal Carnegie library, and then grew to be a medium-sized public school district library in the city of Kent, Ohio. Its original building has been enlarged through three separate expansion campaigns, in order to have space to house its ever-increasing collection, to provide meeting rooms for community groups, and to best serve its increasing numbers of users, both citizens and university students. This study chronicles the many changes that have occurred in the library's collection, budget, staff, services and physical facility from 1958 to 1992.

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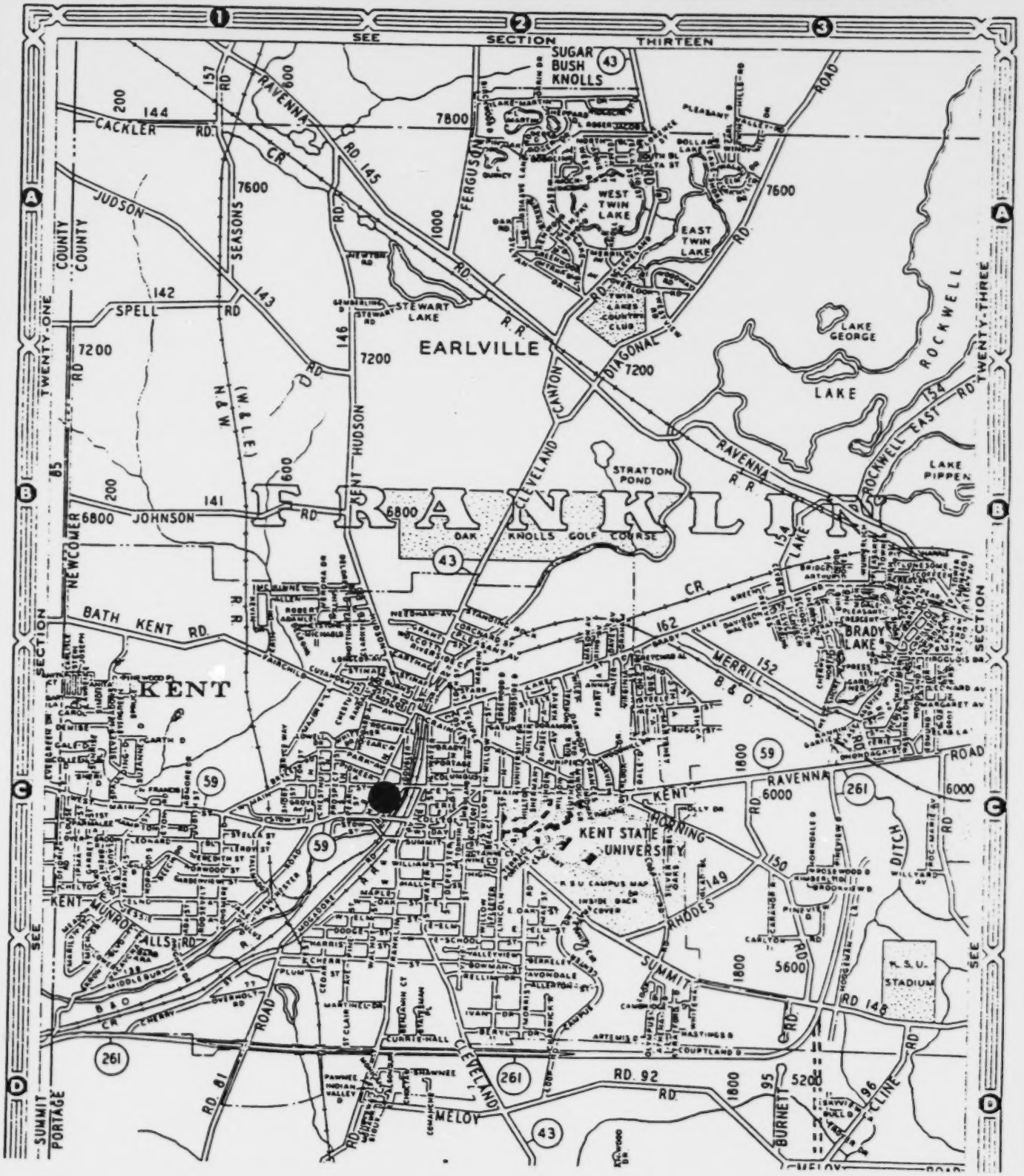
CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION

The Kent Free Library has been serving the citizens of the city of Kent, Ohio for 90 years, and it has undergone many changes since 1902 in order to keep pace with an expanding population and increased need for its many services. There has only been a partial history written of the Kent Free Library, however, up to the year 1957. The purpose of this study is to continue the story of the Kent Free Library to the present day, tracing the development, in ten-year periods, of the following areas: physical facility, collection size, staff, circulation, budget, and services offered (including cooperative networking and use of new technologies), between the years 1958 and 1992, and examining implications for future trends. This study's objective is to organize and synthesize the existing records covering this period in the library's history, so that one comprehensive document exists for patrons and library staff to utilize in learning about the growth of the Kent Free Library.

LOCATION OF KENT FREE LIBRARY



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CHAPTER II.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Contemporary databases, the local newspaper Ravenna Record-Courier, and local historical sources were searched for references to the Kent Free Library. Karl Grismer's 1932 book History of Kent, Historical and Biographical contains a brief chapter on the beginnings of the library as the Atlantic and Great Western Railroad employee Reading Room, housed in the Kent train depot, and its establishment as a Free public library in a building constructed with funds from Andrew Carnegie. Portage Heritage: History of an Ohio County, 1807-1957 contains a one-page section on the same, as well as library statistics (collection size, etc.) for 1957. A 1950 Western Reserve University master's thesis by Barbara Mac Campbell covers the early history of the library in detail, based on Grismer, and briefly describes trends up to 1950 to show the further direction of the library and the need, expressed already in that year by the head librarian, for expansion of the library's facility.

The most recent comprehensive Kent Free Library history is the 1957 Kent State University master's thesis by Rosemary D. Harrick. Harrick also summarizes Grismer's information, but her study deals primarily with the library's services and collection from 1945 through 1956. At this time the collection was practically overflowing the library's walls, and there was

inadequate space for meetings and children's programs. It was her purpose to show to the community the severity of the need for expansion of the library building; this was accomplished five years later, in 1961.

Beyond the 1950's, the 1967 League of Women Voters' publication This Is Portage County gives concise 1967 Kent Free Library statistics, and their 1976 booklet This Is Kent has a paragraph for that year's figures, but neither contain historical information past the founding of the library. Since 1961, the library's facilities have been expanded twice, as the collection size and circulation figures increased apace, and this history will close the gap in Kent Free Library historical documents by chronicling the additions and increases of the next three decades, not only in physical facility but in other areas as well.

CHAPTER III.

METHODOLOGY

The historical methodology was used for this paper. The majority of the sources used are primary in nature: eyewitness or firsthand accounts. These include past issues of the local newspaper, the Ravenna Record-Courier, Kent Free Library Board of Trustees minutes of monthly meetings, annual reports, correspondence, and library scrapbooks and notebooks of public relations materials and clippings.

A great deal of primary and secondary information was obtained through personal interviews with Carmen Z. Celigoj, the current library director; Pamela Simones, current Assistant Director; and Martha Vasbinder, former staff member (1956-1962).

CHAPTER IV.

FOUNDING AND EARLY HISTORY TO 1957

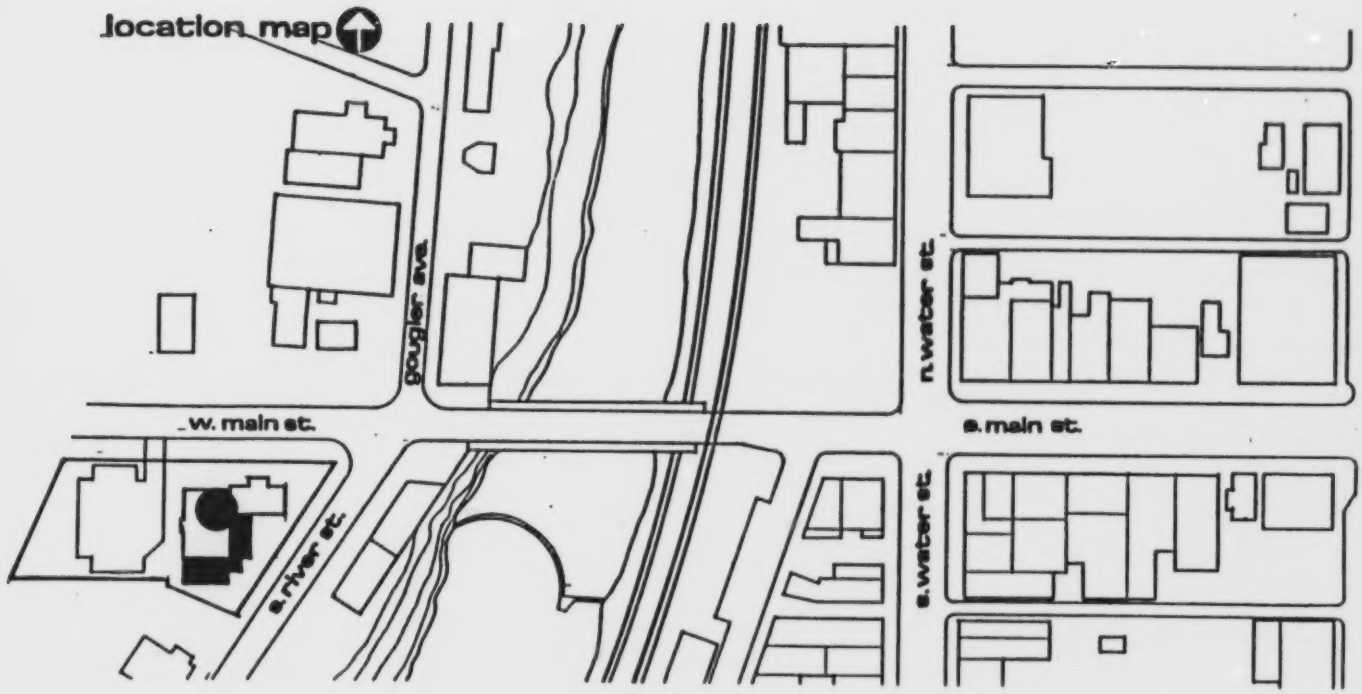
The Kent Free Library began as a reading room for employees of the Atlantic and Great Western Railroad in 1875. Located in the railroad depot on Franklin Avenue (which now houses the Kent Historical Society's Rowe Museum and the Pufferbelly Restaurant), the Reading Room was the only library in the town, and was a subscription library, for members only. Railroad employees paid annual dues of one dollar in order to join the Atlantic and Great Western Railroad Reading Room Association and be able to borrow books, one book at a time for three weeks. The money collected from members was only enough to maintain the collection, so after nine years of steady use but declining membership, the library closed in 1884.[1]

In the next eight years citizens made it known that they wanted a library for the public's use; the three short-lived library associations which came to Kent and quickly vanished were proof of the demand and need for reading material.[2] Finally in 1892 the village of Kent saw the opening of a Kent Public Library and Reading Room in a rented room above a business on Water Street. This new library, also referred to as the Free Public Library, became possible with the creation of a new Ohio state law drafted by Scott T. Williams, attorney, and George E. Hinds, secretary and treasurer of the Railroad Reading Room, that enabled towns with populations under 5,000 to tax their citizens

to provide for a public library. Kent, whose 1892 population was about 3,300,[3] was the first town in the state to take advantage of the law to pass a levy for this purpose, and to appoint a library board of trustees to administer the newly created library. The railroad company donated its defunct reading room's collection, totaling 620 books and several magazines and newspapers, to form the core of the Free Library's collection.

This library, with one move to a different downtown building, was popular with Kent citizens in the waning years of the century. Its collection increased to 2,842 volumes in 1901, which circulated 19,876 times.[4] In 1903, after months of negotiation with Pittsburgh industrialist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie and a year of construction, the library moved into a brand-new building built by $11,500 donated by Carnegie. George Hinds, the former secretary who was now president of the library board, was instrumental in obtaining Carnegie's support. With the backing of the town council he was able to meet Carnegie's conditions for the gift: provide the site, and supply annual maintenance income of 10% of the cost of the building. The new permanent home of the library was a two-story brick and stone building with 3,154 sq. ft. of interior space, built on a 130 x 100ft. plot of land at the corner of West Main Street and River Street given to the library by leading citizen Marvin Kent (who had brought the first railroad to Kent and for whom the town was subsequently named). (see map, p.9)

During the first 50 years of its existence, the primary



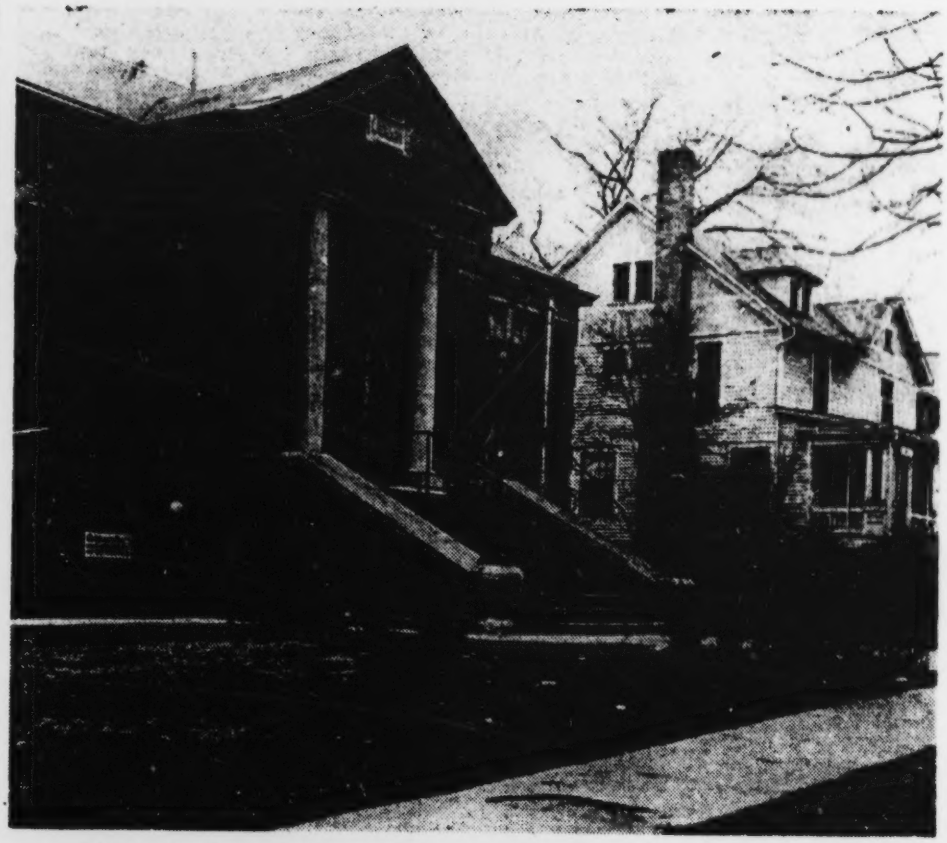
● - Kent Free Library

change in the Kent Free Library was in regard to its system of governance and means of funding. It began as a municipal library under the governance of the city council and was allocated monies from a five-tenths mill on property taxes, but in 1922 the council deeded the library over to the Kent Board of Education as a result of the passage of the Ohio General Assembly's 1921 Bender law. This law gave the Board of Education jurisdiction to appoint members of the library board of trustees and approve the library's annual budget. At this time the Roosevelt High School library was made a branch of the Kent Free Library and its budget combined with that of the Kent Free. It remained so until September 1948 when the Board of Education was able to take over direct control of the school library. The original library budget of $1,114 grew to $7,500 in 1924 with a new, seven-tenths mill tax levy. During the Depression budgets were slashed severely, but were rescued by the 1933 Senate Bill 30, which switched libraries' funding from real property taxes to taxes on intangible personal property such as investments and dividends on stocks. This law was amended in 1951 to allow budget commissions to allocate the intangibles money based on need.[5] This means of funding remained in place for the next 35 years (see chapter IX, p.52).

From 1903 to 1957, as the city of Kent flourished, so did the city's public library. From a village with a population of about 5,000 at the turn of the century, Kent grew into a thriving city of roughly 15,000 in 1957,[6] a 200% increase in population.

During that time span, the Kent Normal School, a teacher's college founded in 1910, evolved into Kent State University, whose students came to rely on the public library for needs not met by the university library. The Kent Free Library enlarged its collection to keep up with this increased use, as evidenced by rising circulation figures. The collection in 1903 numbered 2,700 volumes; circulation for the first nine months in the new building, June 1903 to August 1904, was 15,433, with 936 registered borrowers. (As is usual in all public libraries, many more people visited and made use of the library than actually took books home; in those same nine months, library turnstiles recorded 21,886 visitors.)[7] In 1957 the library's collection had grown to 16,826 books (in addition to films, records and magazines); that year's total circulation was 103,489[8], a 400% increase in 50 years, or double the population growth. In 1957 7,308 people were registered borrowers, which amounts to about 50% of the population of the city of Kent, plus several hundred Kent State University students.[9] This proportion of citizens making use of the library was extremely high, and in the coming decades it dropped to 38% but usually remained around 40-50%.

The early years of the Kent Free Library were ones of tremendous growth, as the library expanded its collection and services to meet those citizens' needs. This growth symbolizes the history of the library, and nearly every year to come would see higher and higher use by the public.



Kent Free Library Board hopes to build an addition on property recently purchased on the west side of the present structure . . . Library Board will continue to rent apartments in the house until funds are collected for the addition.

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CHAPTER V.

CROWDED CONDITIONS: 1958-1960

During the late 1950's the Kent Free Library staff consisted of three fulltime workers and an average of 12 people total, adding in parttime student help. As it was a small staff there was not a great hierarchy or set division of labor; everyone had to do a little of everything. Margaret Zearley was head librarian; she had come to the Kent Free Library in September 1952 from the Tiffin (Ohio) Public Library. Raised in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, she was educated at Allegheny College, Meadville, Pa. and Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. She did most of the cataloging of new material, and public service. As head librarian, she represented the Kent Free Library in the community; she was always accessible to the public, answering questions or giving talks to groups. Other staff included Winona Schindler, children's librarian, hired the same year as Zearley; Rosemary Harrick, who had begun work at the library as a parttime page in 1946,[10] and by the late fifties was working fulltime at the desk; and Martha Vasbinder, hired parttime in 1956,[11] doing primarily circulation tasks. There was no separate reference librarian or reference desk, only the circulation/reference desk located in the center of the first floor of the building, directly across from the entrance. (see photo, p.26) Whoever was working at the main desk was responsible for answering all phone calls, whether circulation-related or reference inquiries,

as well as helping patrons coming to the desk. Most reference questions were referred to Miss Zearley, according to Vasbinder.[12]

In October 1957, Zearley left Kent on an exchange program with another area librarian to operate the post library at Chaumont Air Base in France and tour various European countries. Rosemary Harrick served as acting librarian until Zearley's return in January 1959, at which point Harrick was officially titled the assistant librarian.[13] Harrick continued to work at Kent Free until August of 1960, when she accepted a job at the Kent State University Library. Vasbinder then became fulltime assistant librarian.

Library staff had the continual task of trying to provide modern levels of service in an outdated space. To understand the incredible overcrowding being experienced by the library at the time this study begins (1958), it is helpful to look at the rates of growth for the entire decade, starting with circulation. In the ten years from 1951 to 1960, total circulation rose by 65%--from 77,070 to 127,123. Broken down by category, juvenile circulation nearly doubled, registering a 94% rise from 31,939 to 61,995, while adult book circulation had only a modest gain of 17%, from 45,131 to 52,668. (see Table A-1) The largest annual gain occurred between 1957 and 1958, when total circulation rose by 15% or 15,776 items.[14] The percentages are even higher when in-house use is considered, which was considerable. Unfortunately no records of this were kept.

The collection was enlarged during the fifties to help meet demand, but shelving limitations and budget constraints severely restricted the extent of new purchases. The size of the 1951 collection, including books, periodicals, and records, is estimated to have been 13,900[15]. (In addition, since 1948 the library was a member of a film circuit and received up to 38 educational and recreational 16mm films each month, which it rented to the public for a small fee. Kent was the first institution in Portage County to lend films. The library did not have its own film collection until the late 60's.) By 1960, the library owned 19,454 volumes (including filmstrips, added in 1954); yet this collection was housed in a library building that had been built with an original shelving capacity of 5,000 volumes[16]. The library had increased its collection size by 40% in ten years, while the square footage housing it remained the same. (see Table A-1)

Library users browsing or studying were extremely cramped in the Carnegie building; on most days, according to former staff member Vasbinder, there were never empty seats available.[17] In 1960, 48% of the Kent population held library cards at the Kent Free Library. That amounted to 7,405 adults and children, and 1,195 Kent State University students (see Table A-6). Over 81,000 adults and 6,000 children came to the library in 1960 to view movies and filmstrips[18].(see Table A-4); they usually filled the viewing area to overflowing. The children's room, located in the east half of the lower level, was furnished to

comfortably seat 25 children; however, each Monday and Wednesday's programs had over 50 in attendance, and had as many as 75 during a 1958 program. Vasbinder remembers large numbers of elementary school children also used the library for homework assignments, due to the few school libraries in existence at the time. The other half of the bottom floor, optimistically called the conference room, also had to serve as the film library, technical processing area, and janitorial room.[19]

The library's total income during the fifties grew by 53%; the major portion, the intangibles tax allotment, increased by 43%, from $25,485 to $36,476 (see Table A-3). The rest of the library's means of support came from interest on investments, gifts and memorial donations, and overdue fines collected from patrons. The latter were raised in February 1960, to try to discourage overdues and cut down on the immense amount of time and postage costs involved in sending reminders. Fines went up from 2 to 3 cents per book, per day, raised for the first time since the library opened in 1903. Along with overdues, the library began to charge patrons for reminder notices sent out: 5 cents for the first notice, 10 cents for the second. After items were overdue three and four weeks, library staff personally called patrons to remind them. At this time the library averaged 60-70 overdue books a week, sometimes up to 100, and consequently an inordinate amount of time and money had to be spent attending to them.[20]

During these busy years, the library provided a variety of

educational and recreational programs for the public. For children, there were story hours and films as mentioned above, but also puppet shows, summer reading club, in which readers gave brief oral "reports" to volunteer listeners to show that they had read their books, and received prizes and a party (32 children completed the 1958 program; 60 participated), poster contests, and in 1956 some new and unusual items to check out: baby dolls, donated by the Kent Woman's Club.[21]

For adult patrons, there were coffee hours and speakers during every National Library Week, in addition to other special programs. The library held a six-week creative writing class one year, and a monthly book discussion group met downstairs. Librarian Zearley gave talks and book reviews to local groups. Staff members compiled bibliographies on many different topics; a sample from the period lists books on the Communist threat and patriotism. A Friends of the Library group was organized October 30, 1951, to "spread an interest in the library and its services to other people."[22] The group conducted annual Book Auctions, selling discarded library books and items donated by the public. The auction's proceeds were earmarked for different library needs each year; in 1954 the money was used to start a filmstrip collection, complete with screen and projector,[23] and in 1958 the auction provided for LP records. The group suffered membership declines in the 1960's, however, and became defunct. Local artists and craftsmen were invited to display their works at the library, and women's groups provided annual holiday

decorations.

Every year saw record numbers of people come to the Kent Free Library to use its services in the same small Carnegie building it had occupied for nearly 60 years. (see Table A-1) It was time for the board of trustees and the citizens of Kent to permit the building to catch up to, and then grow along with, its collection and services.

CHAPTER VI.

FIRST EXPANSION: 1961

Staff and the public had been aware for many years of the need for an addition to the Kent Free Library, or for the erection of an entirely new building, in order to improve service and relieve the library's overcrowding. In April 1956, 11% of the library patrons responding to a general survey of services had commented on the lack of space at the library and wanted to see the building enlarged.[24]. It took many years, however, until enough money was on hand to make such plans feasible. Since 1903, the board of trustees had been saving money to improve the building, through book fines, contributions, and careful management of its annual operating funds. They had managed to add about $5,000 annually in recent years. In January of 1954, when a total of about $30,000 had been accumulated, the Board of Trustees conferred with architect Joseph F. Morbito, head of Kent State University's School of Architecture, and authorized him to prepare preliminary plans for an addition.

In June of 1955, an official library Memorial Building Fund Committee was established, to be administered by the head librarian of the Kent Free, Margaret Zearley (serving as chairperson and treasurer), and consisting of the superintendent of the Kent Public Schools, Lewis L. Burkhart, the president of the Kent Free Library Board, Cecil Bumphrey, the president of the Kent Board of Education, and the president of the Friends of the

Library group, Dr. Hallock F. Raup, who appointed Frances Goodwin as Friends representative. The Committee's purpose was to collect and allocate all money received for construction of either a new public library or an addition to the one standing, and to promote the donation of money to the Fund.[25] The Kent City Board of Education served as the depository for the actual money, as per the Bender law. At the end of 1955, the total in the Fund stood at $32,207.20, part of which was in U.S. Savings Bonds held by the library.[26] The first outside money put into it was a $100 donation from the Kent Rotary Club, in memory of Fred M. Fuller, former Rotarian and former president of the Kent Free Library board of trustees.[27] In 1956 an additional $10,000 was added, and the library board reviewed architect Morbito's first sketches for a 3,400 sq.ft. two story addition of concrete block that would extend out from the west side of the Carnegie building.[28]

A major step forward to expansion was accomplished in June of 1957 when Dr. Frank F. Fanelly sold the library board his property immediately west of the Carnegie building for $27,500.[29] The two-story house on the 60 x 140ft. area would continue to be rented out by the board to students and citizens until enough funds could be secured to build. The library took possession July 1, 1957 and subsequently earned about $240.00 each month in rent on the three rooms.[30]

The board had considered using the services of a library consultant to assist them in designing and constructing an entirely new building. During March 1959 they corresponded with

Dr. Ralph A. Ulveling, a library consultant in Detroit, as there were no members of this relatively new profession in the Kent area. But after learning of the size of his fee and the fact that he was booked for several months, they shelved the decision.[31] At about this time the board also learned that they would not be able to purchase the property at the rear of the library facing South River Street, between the library and the American Legion post, as it was not for sale and the owners did not foresee putting it on the market any time soon (although they agreed to keep the library in mind should they do so).[32] Extending the library's property had been a necessary part of the plan for erecting a new and larger building, because the current lot simply had no room left for expansion.

The board of trustees did not give up yet on a new building, however. In November 1959, board member Steve Harbourt met with Walter Brahm, state librarian of Ohio, and reported the results to the board. Brahm recommended razing the Carnegie building and erecting a new one; he agreed that it was entirely inadequate for present needs. However, Brahm judged this would cost the library $275,000. The Board investigated the possibility of seeking a bond issue to raise the many thousands of dollars needed for such a project; the prospects were dim. The schools' bonded indebtedness at that time was near the 9% limit allowed by law, so the system was in need of a new levy for its own use, quite likely as soon as the next year. Thus a library bond issue was out of the question.[33]

Remodeling the existing building was calculated to cost the same as would a completely new building.[34] In September 1959 trustee Dick Donaghy, after a conference with Morbito, told the board that the architect's tentative estimate of the cost of his proposed addition was $30,000.[35] So it was decided to consult further with Morbito about plans for an addition to the west side of the Carnegie building. Librarian Zearley was asked to coordinate closely the desired functions of the new space with those of the existing building, so that together they would work effectively. She suggested to the board some features it should have, such as delivery entrance to the side, a book drop with sliding receiving doors, a lift for books, and a parking area.[36] Morbito's preliminary sketch in January 1960 showed the top floor to be used for reading room, circulation desk, and magazine, book and record storage, with a workroom in rear. The bottom floor, below ground, was entirely devoted to the juvenile collection and programming areas.[37]

After transferring some more general fund money into the building fund, and receiving a gift of $1,000 from a resident of Kent, Mrs. John Parsons, the building fund totaled $51,958 in March 1960.[38] In special session that month the board of trustees analyzed the addition plans to make specific decisions on locations of work areas, and agreed to pay Morbito 6% for complete plans and specifications.[39] They decided to deduct the electric book lift from costs, but left in place the shaft and wiring to install one later. On the 19th of August the board

accepted bids for construction totaling $55,601.[40]

Construction on the addition began in October 1960, with the razing of the house on the former Fanelly property.[41] It continued until spring of the next year. The library remained open its customary hours of business throughout, except for a few days in March 1961 when the west wall was broken through to connect the two halves, and wiring and other work was attended to.[42] The Men's Garden Club of Kent landscaped the grounds around the addition on its own time and at much of its own expense, as a memorial project to deceased club members. Their work resulted in a pebble and rock garden, with retaining wall, in front of the library.

The funds collected by the board of trustees for expansion were only enough to finance the construction of the addition; additional money was needed in order to provide shelving, tables, chairs and other items for furnishing the new wing. Therefore in November 1960 a Furnish the Library Committee was formed, to appeal directly to the citizens of Kent for contributions to this end.[43] Evangeline Smith, vice president of the board of trustees, was appointed chairperson of the committee, and Robert Dix, publisher of the local newspaper, the Kent Courier Tribune, was asked to handle the publicity concerning the fund-raising campaign.[44] On November 10th, the start of National Book Week, letters were mailed to the entire community--to all library borrowers, professional and business people, and industrial firms--describing the library's need for the money and giving the

total amount of the request and what items were to be purchased with it.[45]

The total need determined by the committee was $18,768.75, to be used for chairs, tables, display racks, files, shelving, office equipment and drapes. These would be used to furnish both the adult reading room and the children's room.[46] The library was optimistic that enough money would be raised, since no previous requests for donations had ever been made to the community, and the building's cost was already paid.

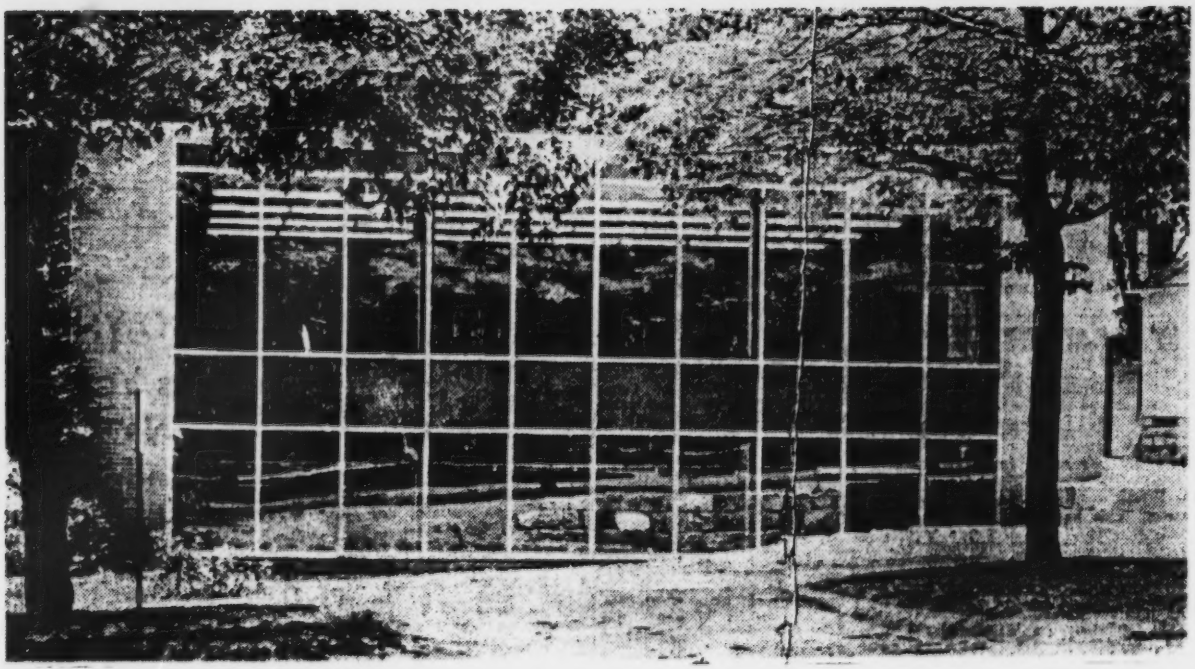
The Furnishings Fund grew rapidly, thanks to contributions from such groups as the Thenus Society, the Home Arts Department of the Kent Woman's Club, and the Kent Lions Club; the latter gave $1,080 from their annual Pancake Festival proceeds to enable the library to purchase a new circulation desk for the addition.[47] Donations ranged from an anonymous $5,000 trust fund gift to the $8.70 earned by Mrs. Caroline Pierson's 4th and 5th grades at Kent Longcoy School through sales of their school newspaper.[48]

By April of 1961 the furnishings fund drive had collected $10,000, and was only $8,500 short of its goal. The library sent out printed "S.O.S." fliers to Kent households, asking for help in raising the last few dollars needed. Local CampFire Girls and Bluebirds helped to deliver the circulars in various neighborhoods.

During this time, early 1961, shelving and tables were being ordered as money became available in the fund, so that they would

arrive in time to be installed before the opening. Some equipment was acquired secondhand; an electric checkout machine, the library's first, was purchased for $80 from the Steubenville Public Library and installed in March.[49]

On June 28th, 1961 staff and volunteers, including a group of Boy Scouts, moved books and materials into the new addition, and the formal opening was held on June 29.[50] Finally, after years of planning, saving, and enduring cramped quarters, the Kent Free Library had its much-needed enlargement.



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1961 Record-Courier photos of the new, 1961 addition: to the right of the Carnegie entrance, and...

NEW SECTION — This is the second floor of the $56,000 addition to the Kent Free Library. It houses books for adults and the check-out counter. The new addition is completely air-conditioned. Bright lights and a large window the length of the addition create a well-lighted reading area.

...to the left, in the old building.

OLD BUILDING — The old part of the Kent Free Library is a sharp contrast to the new addition. Still in use, the section dramatically shows the changes that have been made in architecture since the early 1900's when the Kent Free Library was built.

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CHAPTER VII.

THE SLOW BUT STEADY SIXTIES: 1961-1970

The library board, flush with success over the completion of the library's new addition, nevertheless began to think of the possibility of future expansion, realizing that the library's collection and circulation would not stay at their current size and rate. At the start of 1962 they decided to start saving up money again, mainly to be able to acquire more land as it became available. (A likely prospect was the Andrews' small house and lot behind the library on South River Street, which had been considered previously.) In March, the board put away $1,500 for this purpose.[51]

A few cosmetic changes remained to be made to the newly expanded library to best serve its patrons. The old front entrance, up the steps into the Carnegie building, was closed when the addition was opened, and patrons now used the new doors at the west end of the new wing. All automobile access to the library was through the driveway on Main Street, which resulted in occasional long lines of traffic coming and going. To help alleviate this inconvenience to patrons, the library purchased a 90 ft. by 18 ft. strip of land from the American Legion, which owned the adjoining property south of the library, to make an alternate driveway that opened onto River Street. The price was $1,500, obtained from the Furnishings Fund, which had $2,301 still in it at the time.[52] The driveway was heavily used,

despite the fact that it was only dirt and gravel, and in severe weather it was difficult to navigate. In November 1962, therefore, a "Help Pave Our Drive" book sale was held in the library, to obtain money for improving the driveway's condition.[53] Two years later, in October 1964, the River St. driveway was finally blacktopped.[54]

The Carnegie's limestone front steps were not removed until November 1963, after over a year of discussion about when and how to get rid of them and what to put in their place. The library utilized the help of the city and Kent State University for equipment and labor, and gave the steps to Kent State University.[55] Joseph Morbito redesigned the entrance, adding new glass, enclosing the pillars and installing an ornamental iron railing at the edge of the balcony created by the removal of the steps. The foyer area was turned into a workroom/office/book processing room around this time, helping to relieve congestion down in the conference room.

An oil painting of the Atlantic and Great Western railroad depot, site of the Reading Room that evolved into the Kent Free Library, was donated to the library in the early sixties by Mrs. Jessie H. Spelman and Miss Carrie Hinds, the daughters of Charles E. Hinds, founder of the Reading Room. This painting, created by Professor Elmer Novotny of Kent State University, is still displayed behind the present circulation desk.

The library's circulation increased only slightly during the sixties: the total percentage increase over the period 1961-1970

was 5% (see Table A-1). The city's population, however, had risen by 58% (17,836 to 28,183). An interesting difference; boom times for the city, but slow growth for the library. A possible reason for this might have been the influx of armed forces veterans attending Kent State University on the GI bill after the Korean conflict of the fifties; many were married with children and chose to settle in Kent, but may have only used the university library, not the public library. Television may also have negatively affected use of the library. The number of registered borrowers of the Kent Free for which there are statistics available show a 22% increase from 7,830 in 1961 to 9,541 in 1966 (see Table A-6); 41% of the average 1966 population held library cards. The library's yearly film audiences had dropped 64% by 1965; the number of film showings (an average of 1,000 each year) had only decreased by 38% (see Table A-4). The increasing popularity of television and other societal changes might have had an effect on this program. But by 1969, the audience count had gone back up by 141%, as the library increased its number of film showings by 100%. The difference in attendance was 47,000 more people in 1969 than in 1961, a 64% increase. (see Table A-4) In March 1967, 8mm entertainment and educational films were added to the circulating collection,[56] but these were not shown in the library.

From 1961 through 1970, the Kent Free's total collection was enlarged by 12,744 volumes, or 62% (see Table A-1). Average number of volumes added was 2,462. (The author was unable to

locate an adult/juvenile breakdown for enough years of this period to accurately measure the corresponding percentages.)

Circulation was slowly increasing and there was need for a bigger budget every year, but the library's intangibles tax income increased by a gradual 69% from 1961 to 1970. The average annual rate of increase in tax in the sixties was only 7.4% (see Table A-3). The library's budget was buoyed by a 20% increase in tax in the first year, 1961, and a 17% raise from 1966 to 1967, but the rest of the decade's growth was sluggish, and in two separate years the library actually received less money from the Portage County Budget Commission than it had the year previous.

Despite this slow trend, however, the amount of money the library spent on salaries and personnel-related expenses such as retirement increased by 100% in this decade. This was due partly to an 85% increase in the library's non-tax income over the decade, and to the fact that the board increased the proportion of the total budget used each year for salaries from 41% to 51.7%. The materials budget, on the other hand, stayed between 15% and 17% during this period.

The library's fulltime staff remained at three during these years; total staff increased to 15 by the end of the decade. In the mid-sixties, the staff briefly included a Norwegian visiting librarian. In October 1965, "library trainee" Berit Sembsmoen arrived in Kent from Tonsberg, Norway to begin work at the Kent Free Library. She was placed by the American Scandinavian Foundation in order to gain familiarity with American library

operations. Fluent in English, she had 8 years of public library experience in her native country, including work as an assistant librarian. Upon her arrival the library gave an Open House for her, as well as for new teachers in the community. She worked at the library for one year, leaving in October 1966.[57]

Several staff changes during this period occurred in the children's room. In April 1963 Winona Schindler resigned, having held the position since 1952, and two more children's librarians came and went in the next five years. In May 1968 Suzanna Edgar was hired. Mrs. Edgar had a library degree from Michigan, and had most recently been the librarian at Field School in Kent. She was hired jointly by the Kent Free Library and Portage County District Library in Hiram, to work four days a week at Kent and one day a week at Hiram.[58]

In adult services, Jenny Gillis came on board in September 1962 to replace Martha Vasbinder as second librarian, when Vasbinder left for a job with the Kent city schools.[59] In that capacity Vasbinder helped both the schools and the public library, for she was instrumental in developing the libraries at the two new elementary schools soon built in Kent, Walls and Holden, and the expanded library in Longcoy Elementary; with better school libraries, which are primarily curriculum-oriented in nature, the Kent Free Library's children's staff could concentrate more on providing for children's recreational needs.

A longtime member of the board of trustees, A. L. Lauderbaugh, resigned in March 1964; he had been appointed a

trustee in 1937 and twice served as president. Leland Keller took his position on the board, and this proved to be an important appointment, for in his 20 years as a board member, including several terms as president, Mr. Keller served with distinction and provided invaluable input during two library expansion programs. When he died in 1986, he bequeathed $80,000 to the Kent Free Library.[60] (see Chapter IX)

The Kent Free Library provided a diverse assortment of programming and services throughout the sixties. For children, there was the annual Summer Reading Club; 125 children read ten or more books each in 1965. The Book Critic, Jr. program enabled children to vote for their favorite book of all time, as well as write brief reviews and recommendations of books for other children. Children's nonfiction author C.M. Colby, a popular boys' writer of the times, spoke to school and library audiences about his work.

For the rest of the family, the library started showing travel films and slides as a regular program for the public in September 1965. There were Open House affairs with displays of new books, refreshments, and film showings, during National Library Week and special Spring Book Festivals; these were usually well-attended, in the hundreds. They were shown Fridays at 8:30 pm. A travel series of one kind or another, film or slides, has been a popular program at Kent Free for decades, and continues to be well-attended. Since this was the Vietnam era, the thoughts of many of Kent's residents were on their loved ones

in the armed forces; in 1967 a display was set up in the library of photographs of Kent servicemen and women. A new service instituted during this period that also gave the library an additional source of income was the acquisition of a photocopier for patron use in 1966; copies have remained the same low price of 10 cents for over 25 years.[61]

Throughout its history the Kent Free Library, like all libraries, has had occasional difficulties in recovering long overdue books. A frequently used tactic in the sixties was to advertise "free days," when patrons were permitted to return any overdue books for free, with no questions asked and no fines charged. The library was thus able to reacquire some materials long held, that probably would otherwise never have been returned; in 1966 uncollected fines from the last 7 years totalled $3,000. National Library Week in April was the usual time chosen. In order to be successful, however, free days must not be scheduled in a regular fashion or people will come to expect them and purposely hold on to long overdue books in expectation of amnesty. This seems to have occurred at the Kent Free in the sixties, because there were numerous free days, but they were not very successful in achieving a high number of returned books and so the practice was dropped.[62]

CHAPTER VIII.

NEW LEADERSHIP AND NEW SPACE: 1971-1980

Shortly after the start of a new decade, an era came to an end at the Kent Free Library: in December 1972, librarian Margaret Zearley retired. She had worked at the library for twenty years, with an additional 15 years of librarianship prior to taking the job in Kent. The new head librarian was Clare Gearhart, from Novelty, Ohio. Having obtained both her Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, she had six years of experience as a librarian, the two most recent at the Mayfield Regional Library of the Cuyahoga County Public Library system.[63] Gearhart came with new ideas for improving the library's services and collection. Under her direction a cooperative book buying and processing system was begun with Akron Public Library, whereby Kent got discounted purchase prices and Akron cataloged the books selected for Kent; and Kent Free increased the size of its current adult fiction collection by renting books through the McNaughton system, an inexpensive way to satisfy heavy demand and save shelf space (since the books are sent back after use declines).[64]

Gearhart's tenure at the Kent Free Library was very short, however, as a combination of professional and personal factors led to her resignation in April of 1974. A public controversy developed over Gearhart's spring 1973 dismissal of a children's

librarian who had come to the position in 1972. (The librarian had been working in the library's children's room for a year previous to her promotion, while finishing her Master's degree.[65]) Dozens of Kent citizens attended that year's Kent Free Library board meetings, to express their concern over the decision and their interest in the library's various aspects of operation. Janet Stavole, with a Bachelor's degree from Kent State and working on her library degree there, succeeded as children's librarian in September 1973.[66]

It was during this episode that Carmen Z. Celigoj, a graduate of Kent State University's School of Library Science who had worked three years at the Cleveland Museum of Art library, was hired as adult services librarian. When Gearhart took a combined maternity leave and leave of absence in November 1973, Celigoj was appointed as acting head librarian by the board. Five months later Gearhart resigned, and, in June 1974, Celigoj became the Kent Free Library's new director.

Celigoj immediately faced shortages in library space and staffing. There was no room for an office for the head librarian, so she had to conduct all of her business from the reference desk. Although there were seven fulltime staff, not all were qualified to provide reference help so she could concentrate on administrative tasks and representing the library in the community. To try to alleviate this problem, an internship program was set up with the Kent State University Library School, which enabled graduate students in reference

classes to work the Kent Free reference desk on a volunteer basis, for credit. Finally in August 1975, Celigoj was able to hire a fulltime adult services/reference librarian, as well as a parttime children's librarian and an audiovisual materials specialist, Harry Brecha. Brecha was hired through CETA--a federally funded program that put qualified unemployed persons to work. He contributed greatly to the library; through his photography and other media experience and contacts, he helped to establish a more professional public relations department for the library, when before there had been next to none.[67] During the Bicentennial year he produced a slide show of the history of the city of Kent that had over 200 people in attendance, and became a perennial favorite. It was even designed to be available for circulation to those interested in showing it themselves.

Circulation for the decade 1971-1980 increased by 74%, an average of 6.7% per year (see Table A-1). The population of Kent, however, dropped 7% between the 1970 and 1980 censuses, so the same numbers of people were checking out an increasing number of materials during this time. Adult book circulation jumped 75% but juvenile circ only gained 21%. In May, 1976, daily circulation broke the 1000 mark.[68] In 1976 there were 11,539 registered borrowers, or an estimated 38% of the Kent population; this was an increase of 13% from 10,244 cardholders in 1971 (see Table A-6).

New to the circulating collection in the seventies: framed art reproductions were acquired in 1975 and circulated for six

weeks for a small fee. Also in 1975 the record collection was expanded to include popular music and movie themes, and a new format was added in 1977: audiocassettes of rock, classical and popular music.[69] The total collection was increased from 35,390 volumes to 61,559 volumes in this decade, or 74% (see Table A-6). The adult collection doubled, whereas the juvenile collection gained approximately 65%. Average number of volumes added yearly was 4,128.

Kent Free's allotment of intangibles tax money made a whopping 173% increase in this decade: from $84,705 in 1971 to $232,029 in 1980 (see Table A-3). The main reason was the 30% jump between 1974 and 1975, the first year of Celigoj's tenure as director. The average annual increase was only 11%, with the decade ending with a mere 1% increase over 1979. The personnel portion of each year's budget rose 206%, double that of the 1960's (some of the salary amounts used in calculations excluded PERS expenses, however, so percentage is not entirely consistent). Percentage of total income spent on personnel averaged 48%, ranging from 39% in 1977 to a high of 52% in both 1973 and 1974. Percentage spent on materials stayed level at 16-18% until 1978, when it was increased to 24% of total budget; this was to accommodate the additional audiocassette purchases. Also, money was being set aside annually for capital improvements whenever at all possible, so this is another reason for the variations.

During the seventies, representatives from the boards of the

three Portage County libraries--Reed Memorial in Ravenna, Portage County District Library (headquartered in Garrettsville), and Kent Free--held regular meetings to discuss the possibilities of cooperating in some fashion. An analysis of the county's public library services had been published in 1970 by Kent State University's Center for Urban Regionalism (see bibliography). The "Joint Board," later called the Portage County Library Council, discussed this and their ideas for mutual assistance, such as adopting one library card good at all libraries, daily delivery of books, and non-duplicative collection development.[70]

Some of these goals were accomplished in 1976 when all three libraries joined NOLA: originally the Northeastern Ohio Library Association Reference and Information Services, now shortened to NOLA Regional Library System. It was formed in 1972 to provide a reference and interloan network, supplemental rotating collections, consultation services and continuing education for librarians. Administered by the Youngstown Public Library (which serves as the system's resource library due to its sizeable collection), NOLA in 1976 consisted of 25 public, academic, special, and school libraries in seven counties.[71] The Kent Free Library utilized NOLA's rotating film and books on audiotape collections, as well as its reference and interlibrary loan services and workshops, and continues to be a member of NOLA into the 1990's.

Anther program the libraries cooperated in was Project Visual Library, a 1975 $30,000 LSCA-funded project to provide

service to the elderly and homebound, and large print books to the visually impaired.[72] They were also able to adopt one patron card that worked in all county libraries by switching to a different charging machine.

All along, the individual libraries found it difficult to put mutual concerns ahead of their own library's problems, especially in the case of Kent Free where space was again becoming a major concern. The Kent Free Library board supported the idea of further close cooperation, but had to see to its immediate needs first. The three continued striving to coordinate policies and fee structures, keeping an eye towards the eventual use of automation.

During the seventies, in order to provide better service and accommodate its ever-increasing number of patrons, the Kent Free Library increased its hours of operation. In 1974 the library ended its longheld custom of closing on selected slow Saturdays during the hottest months of the summer, and two years later it began opening on Spring and Fall Sunday afternoons from 1 to 5pm. When over 85% of the 200 patrons surveyed in May 1976 responded in favor of the new hours, the library added 25 weeks of seasonal Sunday openings to its regularly scheduled hours of business the next year,[73] and has continued them ever since.

Change was a big part of programming at the Kent Free in the seventies. Many longstanding and popular programs had their beginnings in this period. There were still preschool story hours each week, plus a toddler program for two year-olds that

was a new idea only Kent and a few area libraries had begun to implement at this time. In 1978 children's librarian Linda Dragoo created an annual Preschool Information Fair, held in conjunction with local preschool and day care providers. Parents attending were presented with a wealth of information on various preschools in the area, could talk with representatives, and take home tips and information on how to share books with their children--while their children were entertained by a program of their own. These fairs continued throughout the early eighties.

Children in grades 4-7 could join the library's Children's Theater and Puppet Club, started by a local mother of two.[74] In 1979, the very popular "Holiday Helpers" program began: 2-hour programs for children 6 months to 12 years, to give parents time to do holiday errands. Activities included movies, games, stories, songs, and snacks; in 1992 Holiday Helpers still were in high demand. The library created circulating "S.O.S." kits in 1979, also: these were boxes of books, puzzles, records, and other items as requested for parents to take home on extended loan to sick or homebound children.[75]

There were also craft sessions for kids; annual Halloween parties; an Akron Children's Zoo program that brought snakes and other reptiles to kids at the library (along with their keeper!); a chalk party for budding sidewalk artists; and regular Swap Meets to trade baseball cards, comic books, and so forth. There were 105 children in the 1974 summer reading program, but by 1980 200 children took part.[76] Movies were shown every Wednesday

evening,and on Saturday mornings as well, to packed houses: average yearly attendance was 61,481! At the close of the decade, the 1980 Presidential election year, Kent children participated in a mock election at the library, complete with polling booths; the program was intended to generate children's and parents' interest in the presidential race in particular and in becoming responsible citizens in general.

New and unique programs and services were created for adults as well during the seventies. Director Celigoj is a firm believer in "hooks," or any unusual program or material that can serve to "reel in" a non-library user and get him or her to start coming to the library, first for the unique item, then later for books or information.[77] Some "hooks" of the seventies included a clothing pattern exchange between patrons, and a "plant exchange day," whereby patrons bringing in cuttings of their favorite house plants could trade for cuttings of new and different plants. Needlepoint classes offered at Kent Free proved to be so popular they continued for many years and spawned an annual needlework exhibit in 1980, judged by local experts and still held in the 1990's. The 1978 National Library Week programs included a presentation on rare books by Kent State University's head of Special Collections Dean Keller, a workshop on book repair, and a talk by noted children's book illustrator Barbara Morrow.

The library board purchased Dr. Andrews' house and property in 1972[78]and it was immediately put to use as storage space for

materials, and to help conduct the library's services to the homebound and elderly, including Project Visual Library, coordinated by Mrs. Gillis.

In the mid-seventies Kent Free stopped charging overdue fines to senior citizens; all they needed was to show a card proving registration in a discount plan for seniors (i.e. medicare) or other dated identification.[79] Unfortunately, however, due to increasing costs, in December 1977 overdue fines for all other patron had to be increased to 5 cents per day, and notice fees went up also. For the first time, the library found it had to charge patrons a service charge for postage on interlibrary loaned materials, and other miscellaneous charges were instituted due to rising operating costs, such as fees for lost library cards or lost date due cards.[80] (This did result in an increase in the amount of fine money collected, in 1978 over 1976, but how much of an increase due to the fine raise is difficult to determine due to unavailable 1977 figures for fines.) The library was still having problems collecting long overdue items, and using much staff time in the process, so in 1975 the library turned over its outstanding fines (totalling over $6,000) to a collection agency. It was decided by the board that it was the necessary step to take in order to insure that every patron had an equal opportunity to utilize the library's materials, and it was successful in its goals.[81]

Turning to the physical facility, in 1976 Kent Free announced a $200,000 addition would be built onto the south side

of the present building. The frugal management of annual operating funds and additional income from family bequests made expansion possible--nearly $150,000 was now at the board's disposal for capital improvement. The remaining funds were raised by the time construction was completed. In the Fall of 1974, faced with constantly rising circulation and increasing demands on the library's facilities, the board of trustees engaged two library consultants from the University of Pittsburgh, Keith Doms (Director of the Philadelphia Free Library and former president of the American Library Association), and Frank B. Sessa (professor of library science and former ALA treasurer) to study the library's current space problems and future needs. In April 1975, Doms and Sessa recommended a 12,000 sq. ft. addition to the current 6,554 sq. ft. would be needed in order to meet the ALA's minimum requirements. The library was far from able to meet the $708,000 cost of such a project, however, so it was decided to implement the first phase of the recommendation--a 4,800 sq. ft. addition. Plans and specifications were drawn up by the Kent architectural firm of McWilliams, Martyniuk, and Schidlowski.[82]

Construction started in September, 1976, with the razing of the Andrews house on South River Street. The new wing added areas for circulation, study, and book stacks on the main floor; an elevator and entrance ramps for disabled patrons and staff use; and on the lower level, it brought together formerly scattered administrative offices into the Carnegie building, provided a

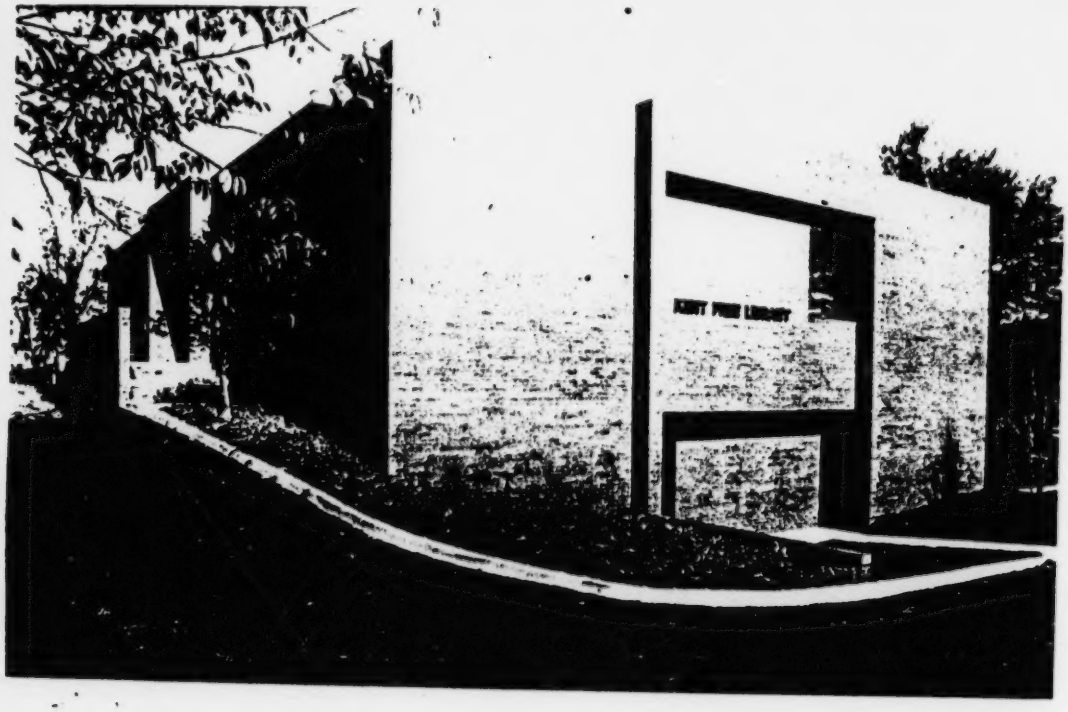
public meeting room and restrooms, and additional space in the children's room including a carpeted story pit area for programs. The meeting room was named after former board of trustees member Dick Donaghy, who had died in 1975, and furnished through contributions made to the library in his memory. Donaghy had been a trustee for 20 years, retiring in 1971.[83]

Because a public library cannot carry a debt from year to year, when the Kent Free board members needed to borrow money for the addition in 1977, they formed the Kent Free Library Foundation, a nonprofit organization incorporated to benefit the library. It can solicit donations to be used for things public money cannot, such as parties for summer reading club. The Foundation, therefore, borrowed money to purchase the property of Mrs. Bartsche, immediately west of the 1961-added building boundary. (see map) The Foundation paved the Bartsche property and then leased the property to the library to use as a parking lot; the library paid rent every year until the property was paid off, and then paid for maintenance costs. The Foundation also provided matching funds so that the library could receive $8,500 from Kent City Council in Federal revenue sharing funds to purchase equipment for the 1977 addition.

The majority of the addition was finished enough to be in use in March 1977, except for some furniture and shelving. The outside of the 1961 wing was refaced to match the new part of the building.[84] An Open House was held on November 20, 1977 to show off the addition.[85] The library received a 1978 Immy Award,

public structure category, from the Kent Chamber of Commerce for the addition's "imaginative appearance and compatibility with existing library facilities." The Immys are given annually to firms whose development, expansion, or renovation projects make a significant contribution to the improvement of the community.[86]

Also receiving a well-earned award in 1978 was Director Carmen Celigoj, who was given the Ohio Library Association's Diana Vescelius Memorial Award. Named for a 1965 Kent State University School of Library Science graduate who died at the start of her professional career, the award honors librarians under 35 or with less than 5 years professional experience who contribute outstanding library service in social responsibility and intellectual freedom.[87] Under Celigoj's direction the Kent Free Library had made great strides, in terms of increased staffing, increased programming, and increased square footage. Despite financial difficulties, the library moved forward.



THE 1977 ADDITION to the Kent Free Library

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CHAPTER IX.

THE BOOMING EIGHTIES:1981-1990

Library patronage, circulation, and collection size continued to increase as the 1980's began. Throughout the decade, around 50% of Kent residents held Kent Free Library cards, an unusually high figure for a small public library.[88] (see Table A-6) In 1981, total circulation had been 208,159; by 1990 it was 53% higher, 318,839 (see Table A-1). The average annual rate of increase in circulation for the 1980's was 5.2%. Adult book circulation increased by 86%, and juvenile circulation by 87%. By contrast, the population of Kent rose only 10% from 1980 to 1990. (It must be noted, however, that because the Kent Free Library is a school district library, its service area includes the Kent School District. This equalled the city of Kent until 1959 when Franklin Township and Brady Lake were transferred to the Kent School District, and 1972 when Sugar Bush Knolls was also included. The service area for the library was formally adjusted on January 18, 1983. So, for the most accurate descriptions of the library's service population, one should include roughly 25% more in the total population, over and above the city total. For the purposes of this study, census figures of the city proper were used in all chapters, to maintain consistency between decades when one or the other new areas were not included yet.)

During the 1980's, the library's collection was enlarged by

40%, from 68,720 volumes to 96,094 volumes. (see Table A-1) Of the three decades under study, this was the lowest percentage increase in collection size. Adult collection increased 36%; juvenile collection increased by 52% however. This trend is the opposite of what occurred in the 1970's, when the adult collection registered the larger increase. The average number of volumes added annually was 8,056. Comparing decades, the library doubled the number of volumes added every ten years.

Between 1973 and 1985, five children's librarians were hired, four reference librarians, seven administrative assistants, and five heads of circulation.[89] In the 1980's the Kent Free Library's staffing turnover rate began to slow. In 1985 Noreen Bobersky was hired as children's librarian; "Mrs. B" has conducted many popular programs for over seven years now. Reference staff has changed slightly, but remains at four, which includes the Assistant Director, Pam Simones. Her Bachelor's degree is from Vassar College, she holds an M.A. from College of William and Mary, and her MLS is from Kent State University. Simones worked as a reference librarian at Kent Free from 1977 to 1980, worked at the Akron-Summit County Public Library and then returned as Kent Free's Assistant Director in 1989.

During the fall of 1980 the board of trustees began to consider implementing a circulating collection of the latest audiovisual format: videocassettes.[90] Through a survey published in the Record-Courier and handed out at the circulation desk, the public was asked for its input: did patrons want

videos, and if so which format, VHS or Betamax, and titles would they prefer? A listing was displayed of titles available for a starter collection. Patrons liked the idea, so for a six-month trial period, winter 1981-82, the library circulated 23 VHS videos to any patron over 18, for a $1.00 fee per title. The response was overwhelmingly positive; in 1982 those 23 tapes were checked out 318 times. (In March of 1982 Kent Free added a few titles from the NOLA video circuit; separate statistics are not available for these.) The collection was tripled in size the next year, and circulation also tripled: 61 tapes circulated 1,018 times. The collection was augmented in leaps and bounds to keep pace with demand, with approximately 20 titles every two months from NOLA's rotating stock, and new purchases using the rental fees collected. By June 1984, the library had boosted the collection to 170 of their own titles, which went out 1,308 times in those six months--a 100% increase over 1983.[91] The most astounding video statistic, however, occurred in 1990, when circulation skyrocketed from 8,801 (each video went out 7.1 times), to 27,440--an amazing 17.3 circs per video. The number of video titles had only been increased by 28%, but circulation increased by 212%. There are a couple of reasons for this: (1) the $1.00 per video rental fee was dropped in 1989; (2) the limit and length of loan were increased: instead of three videos for three days, one could take five videos for seven days. Subsequently, patrons took out more titles at a time. (3) Automated circulation meant items were checked back in much more

quickly, and thus shelved more quickly as well. Still, with no changes in policy, video circulation increased by 15% in 1991 and by 38% in 1992 (see Table A-4). The library has found an immensely popular item that continues to grow in popularity.

Compact discs were added to the collection in 1987[92]; the collection now numbers 932 and had a circulation of 9,646 in 1992. (Table A-4; CDs included in Recordings figures)

New in 1980 services for children: "Dial-a-Story," a separate phone line set up with 24-hour recordings of children's stories and folk tales. Tapes were changed every week or so. It was an instant success: over 150 callers a day heard the four-minute messages; in the first six months of the service, the line received 20,000 calls. Due to the incredibly high demand and the fact that only one person could call in at a time, the library had to keep publicity low-key, and only give out the number to those who asked for it.[93] Dial-a-Story is still operating in the 1990's, although the volume of callers has decreased. In 1980, annual calls totalled 42,000, with an average of 1200 calls every week. From 1983 to '84, the volume of calls decreased by 85%; by 1990, the most recent statistics available, total yearly calls had been 5,901, and an average week's tally was 135.[94] Dial-a-story was an extremely popular idea when new, but after the novelty wore off, use dropped sharply. With the extreme popularity of children's videos, which can entertain a child for even longer periods of time than a four-minute call, Dial-a-story has been outdone.

In 1984 the library's first annual Spring Bake-Off for children was held; the bake-off has been an extremely delicious and well-liked program for eight years now. Another offbeat item the library obtained for circulating was made possible through a 1983 program with the Polaroid Corporation and the American Library Association. "Sun" instant cameras were made available for patrons to check out for free for two weeks.[95] The children's room staff included these in their "Birthday Boxes," which were new for 1983: kits with books, tapes, puppets, activities and of course a specially shaped cake pan, for hosting a child's birthday party. Kent Free Library reference librarian and actor James Freeman starred in a staff-written, one-man play profiling the life of Andrew Carnegie during this period. It was performed on the 150th anniversary of Andrew Carnegie's birthday April 20, 1986, at the annual Trustees Tea, and twice during National Library Week. [96]

Other programs and services for adults included free income tax help; a TravelOhio display of sightseeing brochures every June; a newsletter for teachers and numerous bibliographies; free Sign Language classes; a guitar ensemble performance; and a very successful program on "Public Relations for Clubs," with local media representatives sharing publicity tips and procedures. The adult book discussion group continued, as well.

The library's book auction of the 1950's evolved into the annual book sale, staffed by student or retired citizen volunteers. It was held on the lawn in back of the library for

many years, then in 1980 was held as part of KentFest, the downtown fair.[97] The venue and date changed again in the mid-eighties, when the library used the garage of the law offices across River Street and held the sale as part of National Library Week celebrations in April or in the dog days of August. In the fall of 1992 the sale was moved to Kent Roosevelt High School as part of their Teddyville celebration; this gave the school a share of the profits in return for their help in organizing and running the sale, which had grown to be too large for library staff to undertake each year. The library's portion of the proceeds went to the Kent Free Library Foundation. On January 1st, 1986, a new Ohio law went into effect that had a profound effect on the state's public libraries, including the Kent Free. The state government repealed the locally-levied intangibles tax law, which had become inadequate to support most libraries' budgets, and replaced it with the Library and Local Government Support Fund (LLGSF), which came from 6.3% of the state income tax revenue. This new means of funding was more equitable, for it consisted of a (1) Guaranteed Share of funds given to libraries, that would always at least equal the previous year's funds plus inflation; and (2) an Equalization Share, which would divide up the excess tax money according to a population-based equalization formula. Under the new law, Kent Free Library's tax revenue increased nearly 12% from 1985 to 1986. The next year, funds increased 32%. LLGSF was an immediate improvement over intangibles for Kent, within two years--in no single previous

year had the library received as great an increase in tax income. Because of the way the law was structured, funding looked to be improving for many years to come. The average annual tax increase received by Kent from 1981-85 was 10.7%, whereas after LLGSF went into effect, 1986-1990, Kent Free received an average annual increase of 16% (see Table A-3).

When it came time to allot Kent Free's budget to salaries and to material in 1981-1990, on the average, 47.5% of the budget went to salaries, and 21.5% to materials. To accommodate videotape acquisitions, the 1982 audiovisual budget was increased 95% over that of 1981. Only a modest increase was used when introducing CDs into the collection, however.

During the eighties Director Celigoj secured two federally-funded grants for new service projects at Kent Free Library. In 1982 she got the library a $21,938 federal grant, from LSCA Title II funds, for Project CAT (Computer Access Today). The money was used to purchase two IBM personal computers for public use, along with printers, software packages such as word processing and games, books, computer magazine subscriptions, and wages for a part-time clerk to teach one-hour computer orientation classes to patrons. According to Celigoj, CAT was the first computer literacy project done in the Kent area, and it later served as a model for several other library programs concerning computers for the public. The Project CAT promotional campaign was featured in ALA's "Great Library Promotion Ideas" booklet, one of 40 ideas from around the country. During the project year, over 1,000

people completed orientation sessions (4% of the population of Kent); the terminals were used by about a dozen people a day. CAT proved to be a timely and successful project; the computers remain popular with the public, and the library has continued to upgrade and improve its computer hardware and software.[98]

The library already used a computer for cataloging materials, called Bibliofile. This, and getting personal computers for certain staff functions, was the beginning of the Kent Free Library's move into integrated computer technology for patrons and staff alike.

Another grant Celigoj secured for the Kent Free Library during this time was a $9,328 LSCA Title I award for Project MAZE--Manage A to Z Easily. It ran from July 1985 to June 1986. This adult literacy project focused on acquiring materials for adults teaching themselves to read or attending reading classes taught in the library through the Adult Basic Education program. With these funds the library purchased 500 books for adult new readers on topics such as car repairs, how to get a driver's license, and fiction titles, and materials to promote the program. After the successful initial year, the service continued to be provided by the library.[99]

In 1987, the 200th anniversary of the U. S. Constitution, the Kent free Library was one of 18 Ohio libraries selected by the National Endowment for the Humanities to participate in "Bicentennial Bookshelf." This program provided money to purchase reference and circulating materials that would form a

diverse collection pertaining to the history and nature of the Constitution. Matching funds were needed locally in order to obtain the grant, and again members of the Hinds family showed their commitment to the Kent Free Library: Comfort S. Martin, granddaughter of George E. Hinds, and Carrie Anne Martin, Hinds' great-granddaughter, donated the needed $500[100].

The 1977 addition worked well for a few years, but as had been projected by the 1975 consultants' report, more space was going to be needed soon to alleviate the crowding and keep pace with the library's growth. Working conditions for staff were becoming intolerable, as they tried to make do with the cramped spaces in the old Carnegie building.

In 1983, phase two of the consultants' expansion plans was implemented. The library planned a 6,000 sq. ft. two story addition, to expand the library's south and east sides in an "L" shape. The top floor was for added stacks area, more seating for patrons, an Ohio History room, and workroom areas for staff. The bottom floor would provide increased space for the children's department and include a new conference room. An expanded parking lot was also part of the plan.[101] This largest expansion project yet in the Kent Free Library's history, expanding its floor space by 50% of the previous size--to 18,000 sq. ft., was made possible in part by the largest bequest ever received by the library.

The estate of Dr. and Mrs. Florence Turner, a longtime library patron and library board trustee for 21 years, bestowed

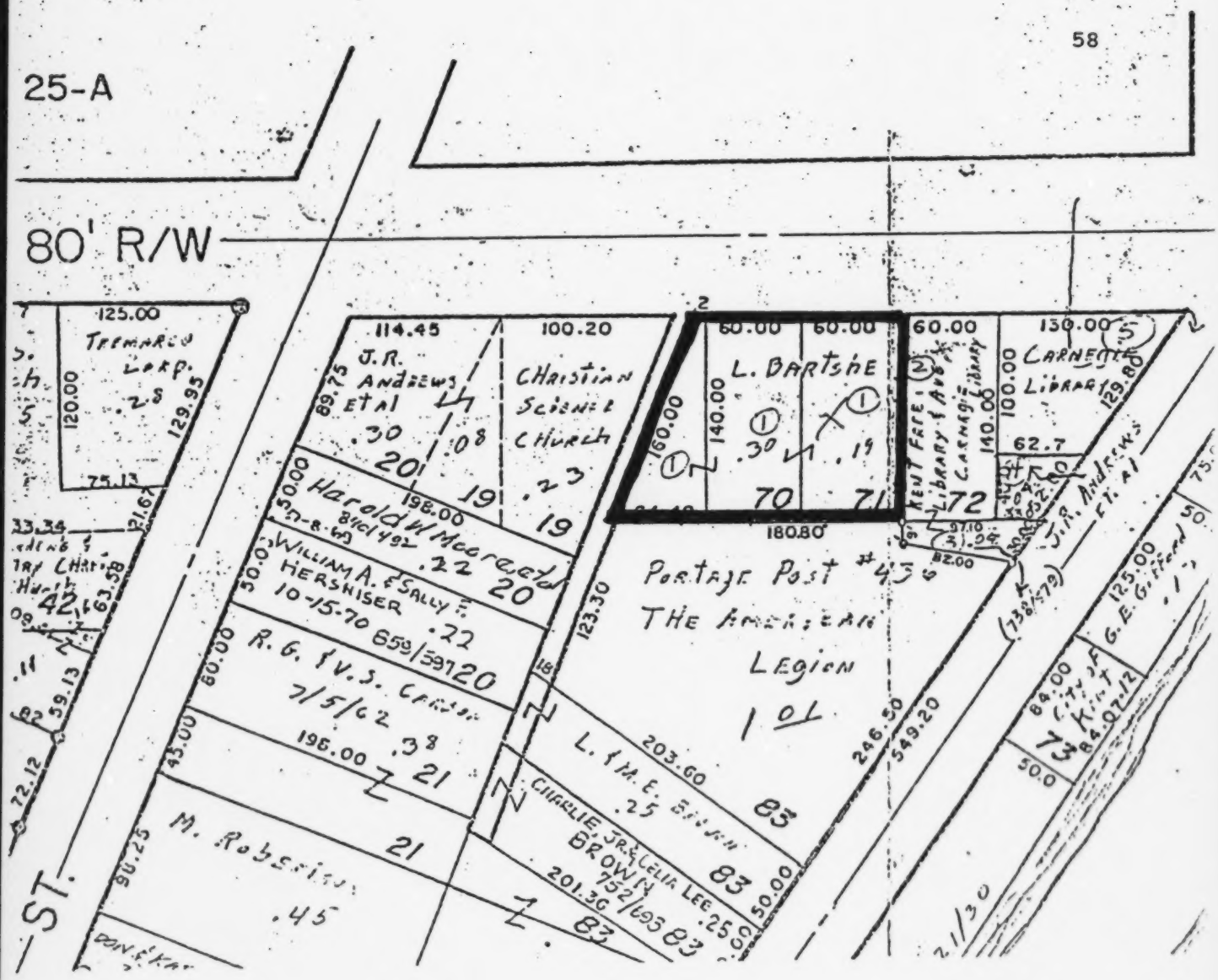
$300,000 upon the library. With this in hand, the library applied for and won a $253,094 federal Emergency Jobs Bill/Library Service and Construction Act Title II grant, administered by the State Library of Ohio, which required an equal share of local funds.[102] Kent was one of 18 Ohio libraries to received a grant that year, in one of the largest amounts awarded. As had happened in the past when the library funded expansions, this total of $453,094 was not going to be enough to both construct and furnish the addition, so a fundraising campaign aimed at clubs and civic organizations was undertaken at the same time the plans were announced. The campaign's goal was $40,000, which would cover the costs of not only tables, chairs, and steel shelving, but a sorely needed new card catalog unit. Two of the many citizens of Kent who contributed to the fund were Mary Hinds Bopp and Edith Hinds West, granddaughters of George E. Hinds, one of the Kent Free Library's most important early founders and a trustee until 1920. They donated $1,000 in memory of him.

By February 1985 the fundraising committee had completed their task, with a $1,000 donation from Ameritech that put the fund over $41,500.[103] For her efforts as chairperson of the committee and her overall work on behalf of the library, Catherine Dumm, former trustee, received the OLA "Citizen of the Year Award" in 1985.[104]

Three houses on West Main Street had been purchased by the library in the late seventies (the "Bartsche property," see

illustration on p. 58); their demolition marked the official start of construction on the "Turner Addition." The library managed to remain open normal hours of business for almost the entire period of construction; there were a few closings of a day or two for electrical work and carpet installation, and occasionally portions of the collection were inaccessible to patrons while shelving was installed or moved. Construction was completed in August 1984, and the official dedication ceremony was held January 13, 1985.[105] The library received a second Immy Award from the city of Kent for the Turner addition.

In 1988 the Leland Keller Ohio History Room was created, out of the small second-story work room that had originally been the front entrance foyer of the 1902 Carnegie library. Using a $5,000 gift from Kent Rotary, the room was decorated entirely with locally obtained materials in a turn of the century style. Keller was president of Home Savings and Loan Association and past president of Rotary, among other activities during his lifetime of service to the community. The Keller Room contains the library's collection of history and travel materials on the city of Kent, Portage and neighboring counties, and other areas in the state of Ohio. The Keller Room was officially dedicated on April 16, 1989. [106]


25-A
58
80' R/W
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TREMARCO CORP.
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120.00
129.95
75.13
21.67
33.34
163.58
42
59.13
72.12
ST.
114.45
100.20
J.R. ANDREWS ET AL
.30
.08
20
19
CHRISTIAN SCIENCE CHURCH
.23
19
50.00
198.00
Harold W Moorefield
8/16/92
.22
20
WILLIAM A. & SALLY E. HERSHISER
10-15-70 659/597
.22
20
60.00
R. G. & V. S. CARSON
7/5/62
.38
21
45.00
196.00
21
M. Robertson
.45
90.25
60.00
60.00
60.00
130.00
L. BARTSHE
.30
.19
140.00
160.00
70
71
72
KENT FREE LIBRARY & ADD'L CARNEGIE LIBRARY
CARNEGIE LIBRARY
100.00
129.80
62.7
180.80
97.10
31.94
82.00
Portage Post #43
THE AMERICAN LEGION
101
123.30
203.60
L. & M. E. BIRCH
.25
83
CHARLIE, JR. & LELIA LEE BROWN
752/695
.25
83
201.36
50.00
246.50
549.20
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J.R. ANDREWS ET AL
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G.E. Gifford
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CITY OF KENT
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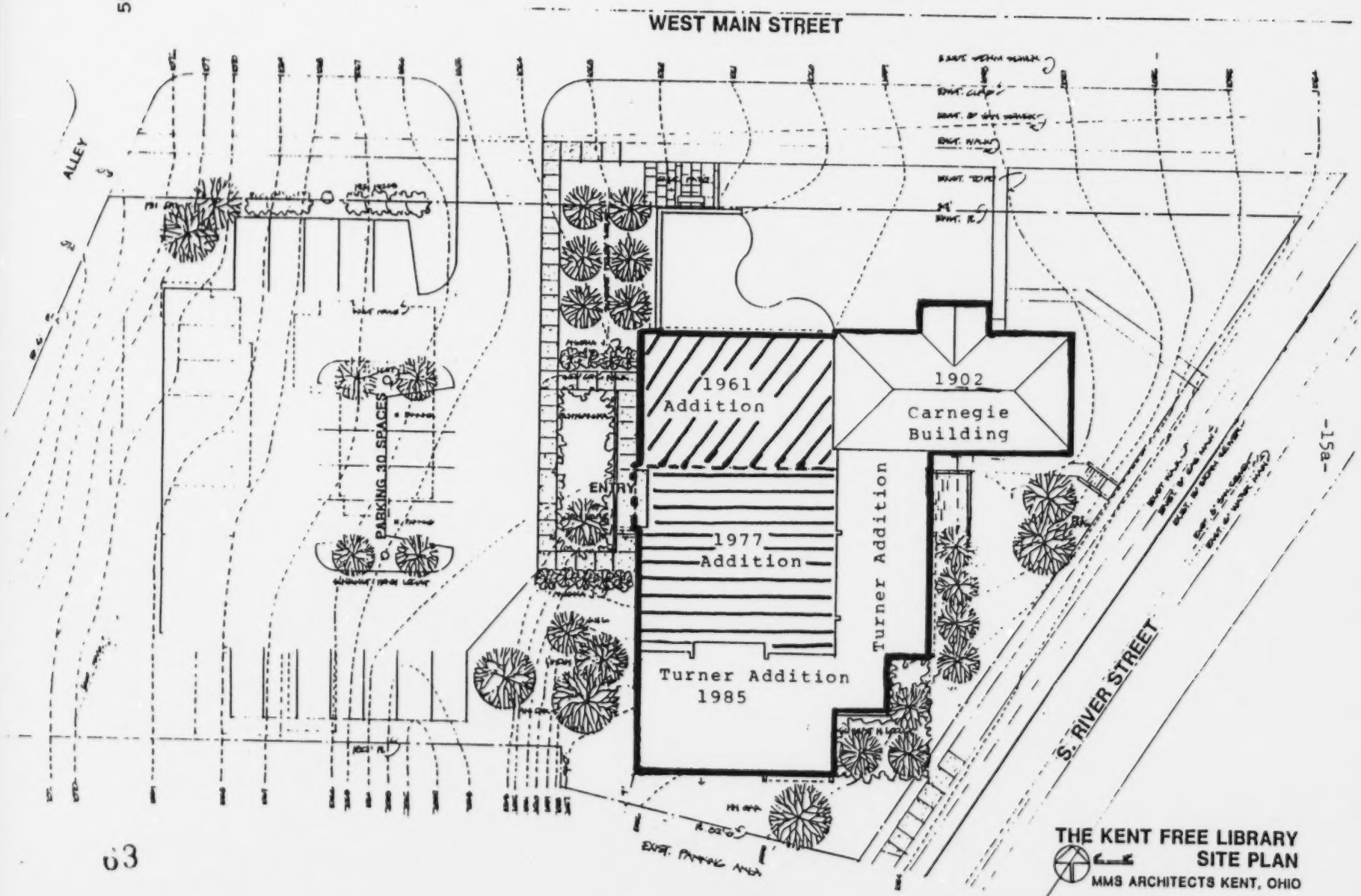

THE KENT FREE LIBRARY
SITE PLAN
MMS ARCHITECTS KENT, OHIO

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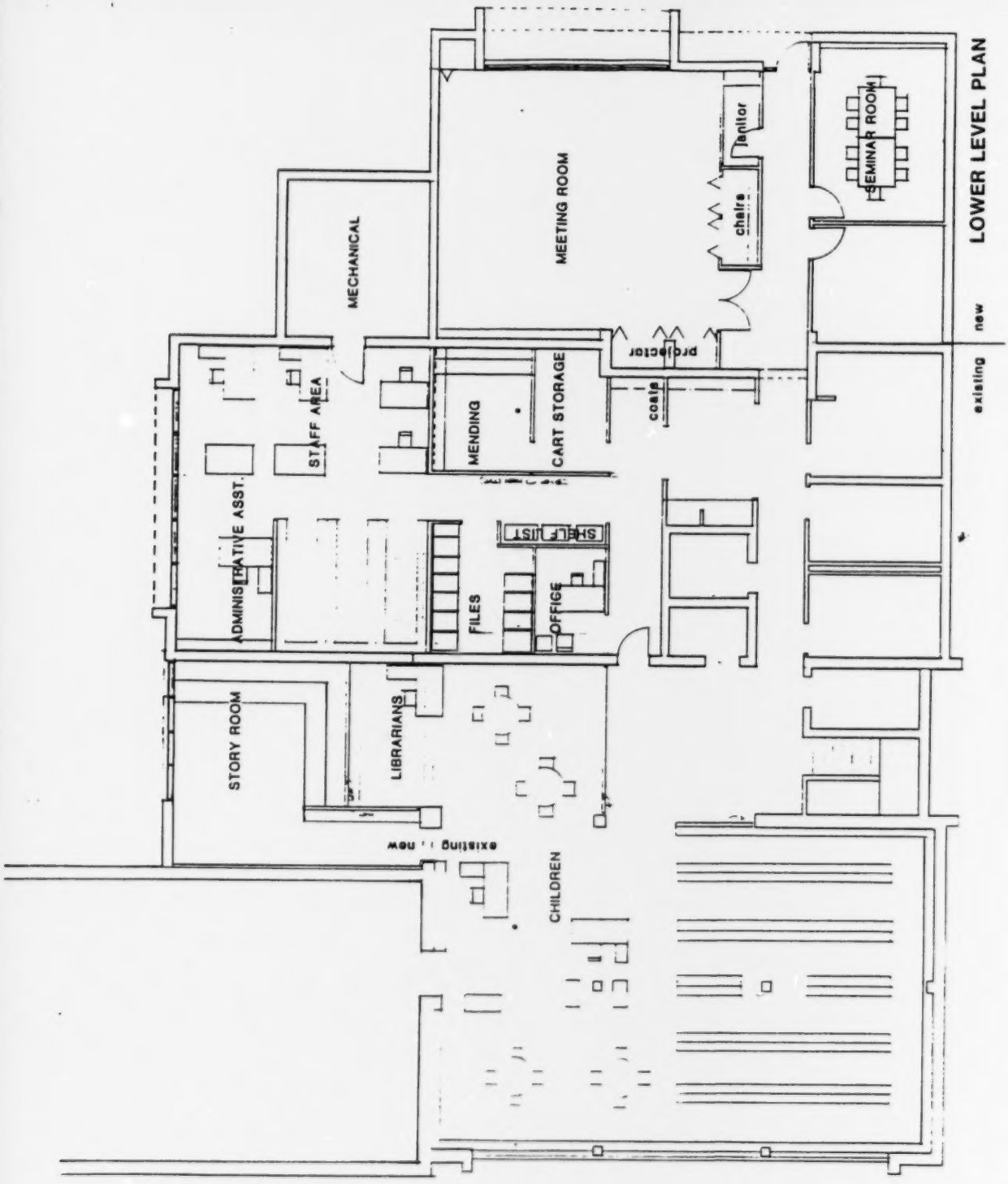
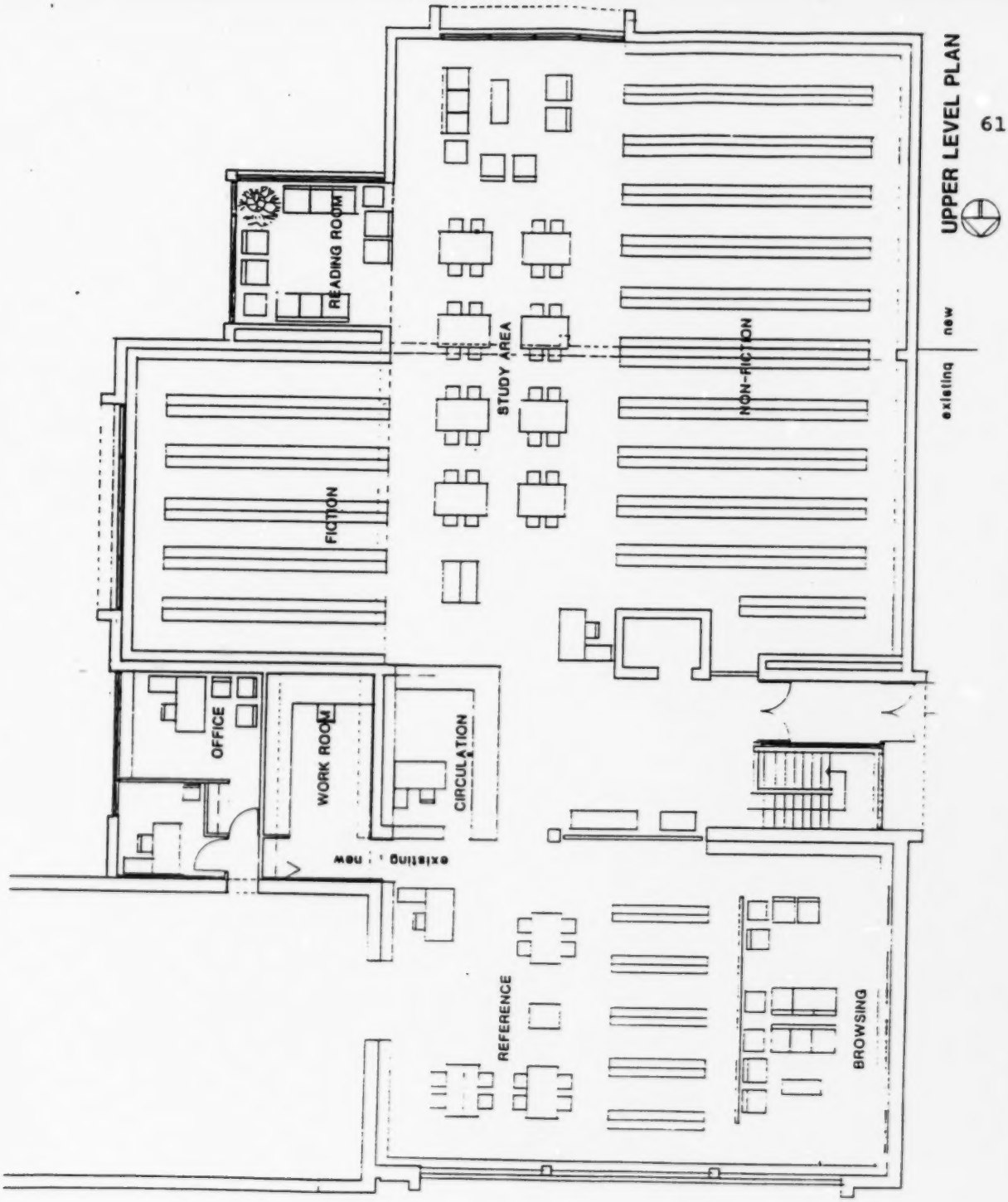
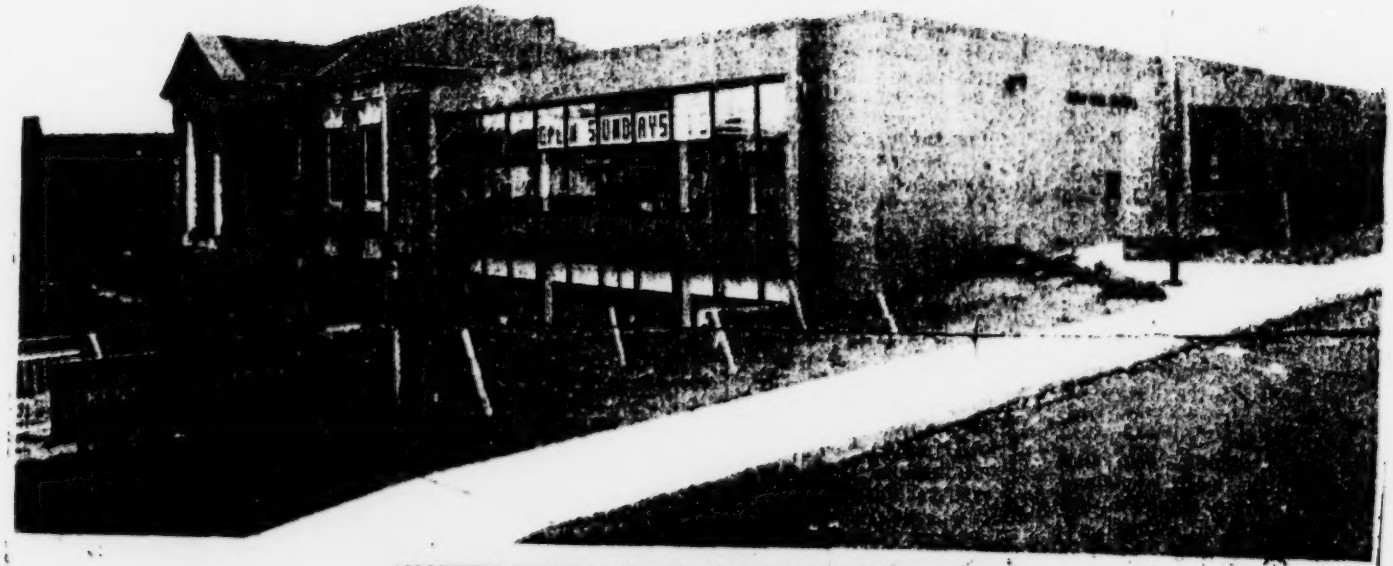


FLOOR PLAN – LOWER LEVEL



FLOOR PLAN - UPPER LEVEL

62



ANOTHER KENT landmark, the Kent Free Library, netted Immy honors in the professional-institutional category for expansion and renovation of library facilities.

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CHAPTER X.

AUTOMATION AND THE FUTURE: 1991-1992

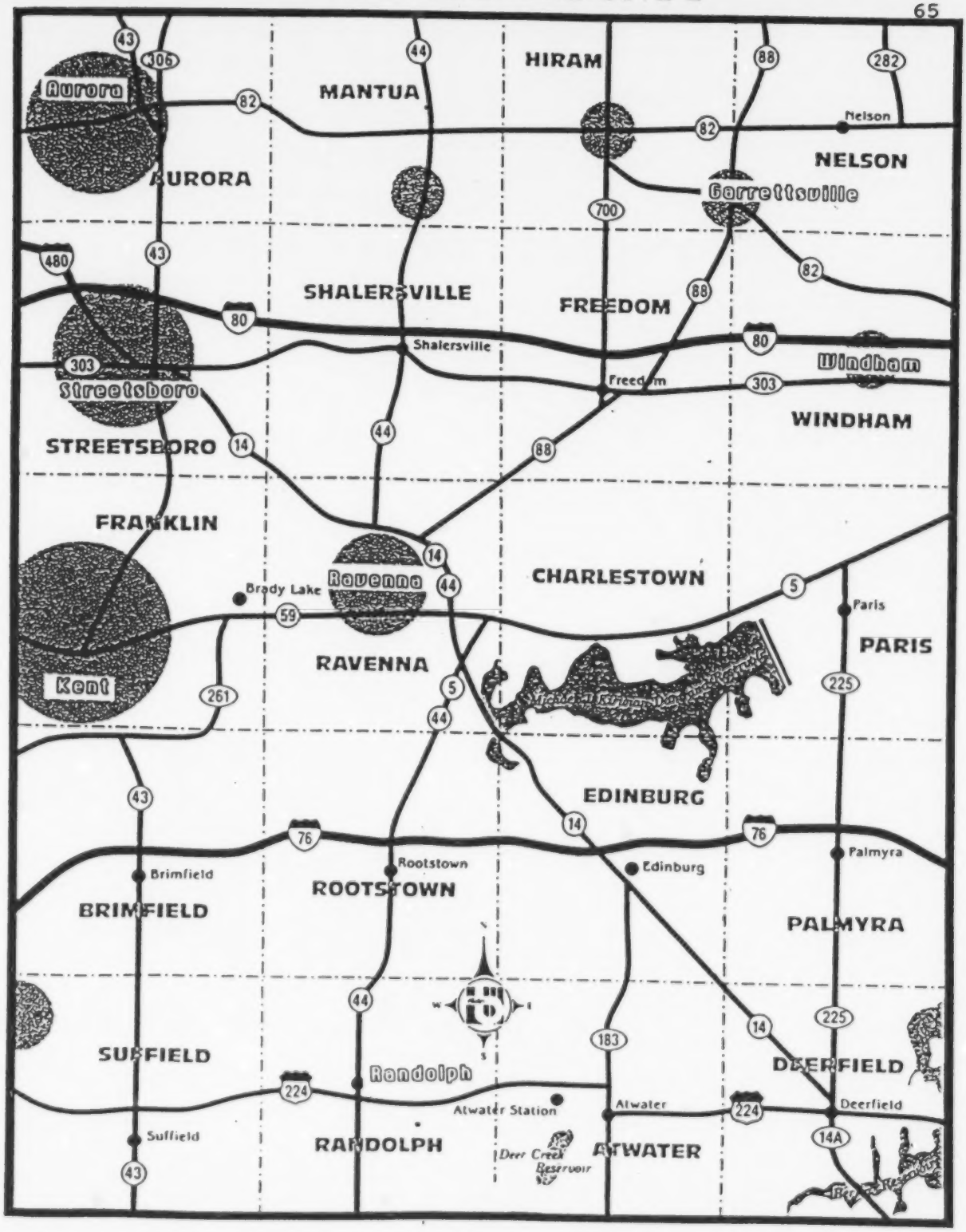
As the 1990's began, the Kent Free Library entered a new era in library operations, as it became fully automated in both circulation, public catalog, and technical processing, and thereby linked with Reed Memorial's and Portage County District Library's holdings. (see map, p.65) The joint boards of trustees had been working on making the transition for many years; money was the greatest obstacle. The three libraries established the Portage County Consortium in order to reduce costs to each member library through resource sharing. From this time forward the LLGSF tax money received by the county would be divided into four parts instead of three, so that a specified amount would go directly to the Consortium to pay for the continuing costs of automation. All circulation policies had to be unified as well, so that online, loan periods and fine levels would be consistent. After careful study of several online systems, the Consortium agreed to select Inlex (produced by Hewlitt-Packard), primarily for its ease of operation for first-time computer users.

In the Spring of 1990, the library staff inventoried its entire collection (96,094 volumes); retrospective conversion to database and printing of "smart" barcodes (containing author/title/call number as well as barcode number) was completed by the Fall of 1990. The library then closed to the public for

the week of December 17-25, 1990 in order for all staff to be able to barcode the majority of the collection. (The other Portage County libraries also closed during the winter, on a staggered schedule.) The week before Christmas is historically the Kent Free Library's slowest in terms of circulation and in-house use, so closing then inconvenienced the least amount of patrons, and with advance advertisement the library was able to get a large number of materials returned by this time. From her prior experience in automating, Assistant Director Simones had found that this was the fastest and most efficient way to barcode the greatest number of items with the least amount of errors, rather than trying to barcode while conducting normal library business. (The only glitch in the whole process was the incorrect conversion of the library's entire audiovisual collection; classical music was placed in the biographies, and so forth. By the end of 1992, records for videos, compact disks and audiocassettes had been corrected and only the record album collection remained to be fixed and returned to circulation.)[107]

Planning for the Turner addition of 1985 had included provisions for computer installation, so very little additional work was needed to the physical facility in order to accommodate wiring and terminals, although the fit was not as ideal as it would have been with a building built entirely in recent years. Circulation and cataloging terminals came online in March 1991, after staff had received training on the new system. From January, patrons were being reregistered for new cards. The

PORTAGE COUNTY



public access catalog terminals came online in May 1991, and at the same time the library's card catalog was removed, due to space limitations and in order to insure that patrons learned how to use the new catalog.

With the new system Kent Free's patrons now had access to all of the county's holdings: 298,000 items in 1990 (Portage County District, with four branches and a bookmobile, has the largest individual collection, but it is only about 7% larger than that of Kent Free, which was 96,094 in 1990.).[108] They could see instantly if a book was on loan, and via daily delivery of reserved books, timely receive a copy from another Portage County library, or use their new card in person at any county library. The Inlex system greatly aided staff in their jobs, allowing easier and more accurate inventories of the collection, for example. Staff and patrons alike viewed automation as a welcome and long overdue addition to the library.

Another new technology brought to the Kent Free Library in the 90's was the CD-ROM. In 1991, the library began using TOMCAT, the catalog of holdings for all NOLA libraries and automated inter-library loan system, and obtained Facts On File and DiscLit American Authors (Twayne's U.S. Authors biographies). In 1992, Kent obtained the Baker and Taylor Link, which is the CD-ROM equivalent of Books In Print plus audiovisual materials, and is used in making acquisitions. In the future, according to Simones, the library intends to expand its CD-ROM capabilities to include many more reference tools now occupying large amounts of

space in their print form, such as telephone books and other multi-volume sets.[109]

Total circulation for 1991 showed an increase of 23% over 1990 circulation: from 318,839 to 391,821 (see Table A-1). Including the 12% increase in 1992 figures (439,276), the rate of circulation increase for the three years 90-92 was 38%. Average number of items borrowed per patron (total circulation divided by total number of registered borrowers) was 24 in 1992. When Celigoj started as director, in 1974, Kent Free Library ranked 88th out of 250 Ohio public libraries in total annual circulation. By 1990 the library had moved up to 73rd.[110]

In terms of its budget, the library experienced a slight decrease in LLGSF funding from 1991 to 1992, as a result of the 1990 freeze on funds from state income taxes. Kent Free received 8% less tax money in 1992 (see Table A-3). The percentage of money allocated to salaries was 50% in 1992, and 20% went to materials. The latter included over $4,000 for CD-ROMs. Staff numbers remained stable during this two-year period; the library's fulltime equivalent was 21.2 (including four reference librarians, two children's librarians, a public relations coordinator, an administrative assistant, full and parttime staff at circulation and technical processing, and pages).

The Kent Free Library is a vital part of the Kent community. It has been so since its founding 90 years ago. Kent Free provides informational, cultural, and recreational services to its community, as well as to all of Portage County. The library

has been challenged by periods of extremely fast growth in circulation and in-house use, which filled the building to capacity and beyond, necessitating three expansions to the original Carnegie building. Over the 38-year period the library has seen many changes, such as increased funding due to the adoption of the Library and Local Government Support Fund, a staff doubled in size to better serve the larger numbers of people using the library, and an improved collection that now includes compact disks and videocassettes. Nearing its 100th anniversary, the Kent Free Library looks to the future for new technologies and services with which to provide the people of Kent.

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3.Mac Campbell, p. 22.

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9.Directory of Ohio Libraries 1958.

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11.Trustees minutes, December 1956.

12.Author's telephone interview with Martha Vasbinder, July 11, 1993.

13.Trustees minutes, ?October 1957

14.1951 figures from Harrick, Appendix VIII; 1957-1960 figures from trustees' annual statistical reports.

15.Exact figures were only found for book collection and magazine subscriptions, in Harrick, p. 42.

16.Campbell, p. 62.

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23.Harrick, p. 45.

24.Harrick, p. 88-89.

25.Board of trustees minutes, June 15, 1955.

26.Board minutes, December 7, 1955.

27.Record-Courier, March 2, 1955.

28.Board minutes, May 9, 1956.

29.Record-Courier, June 1957.

30.Board minutes, 1957.

31.Board minutes, March 4, 1959.

32.Board minutes, May 6, 1959.

33.Board minutes, November 4, 1959; Record-Courier, 1959.

34.ibid.

35.Board minutes, September 2, 1959.

36.Board minutes, September 2 and November 4, 1959.

37.Board minutes, January 13, 1960.

38.Board minutes, March 2, 1960.

39.Board minutes, special session March 16, 1960.

40.Board minutes, special session August 19, 1960.

41.Record-Courier, December 28, 1960.

42.Board minutes, March 1, 1961.

43.Record-Courier, November 16, 1960.

44.Board minutes, September 7, 1960.

45.Board minutes, November 2, 1960.

46.Record-Courier, November 16, 1960.

47.Record-Courier, July 21, 1961.

48.Record-Courier, 1961?

49.Trustees minutes, November 2, 1960.

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51.Trustees minutes, March 7, 1962.

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63.Record-Courier, December ? 1972.

64.Trustees minutes, February 7, 1973 and March 7, 1973.

65.Trustees minutes, October 6, 1971 and September 6, 1972.

66.Taken from trustees minutes April 1973 through April 1974, and Record-Courier articles on July 2, 1974 and March 20, 1975.

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73.Trustees minutes, March 10, 1976; May 20, 1976; and September 8, 1977.

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86.Record-Courier, Fall 1978

87.Record-Courier, October 30, 1978.

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101.Record-Courier July 8, 1983

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103.Record-Courier February 8, 1985

104.Trustees minutes, September 12, 1985

105.Trustees minutes, February 8, 1985

106.Record-Courier, April 17, 1989.

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108.Portage County Consortium fact sheet, 1990.

109.Interview with Simones.

110.Source: Statistics of Ohio Libraries, 1991.

Table A-1

Collection and Circulation

	Year	Adult Volumes	Juv. Volumes	Total Volumes	Adult Circ.	Juv. Circ.	Total Circ.
1	1958	---	---	17,675	54,457	55,691	119,265
2	1959	---	---	18,147	61,552	---	125,443
3	1960	12,856	6,598	19,454	52,668	61,995	127,123
4	1961	13,258	7,270	20,528	---	---	125,415
5	1962	---	---	22,367	69,083	---	131,062
6	1963	---	---	23,791	68,772	---	113,703
7	1964	---	---	24,812	*58,857	58,556	138,425
8	1965	15,615	9,290	24,905	*58,408	54,498	133,171
9	1966	13,233	10,106	26,339	*59,024	57,463	136,342
10	1967	---	---	28,272	70,190	---	130,801
11	1968	---	---	30,553	69,928	---	136,748
12	1969	---	---	31,983	63,407	47,313	134,202
13	1970	---	---	33,272	74,780	---	131,615
14	1971	---	---	35,390	69,498	---	119,378
15	1972	---	---	35,057	74,553	---	125,676
16	1973	25,303	12,486	37,789	70,931	64,728	135,659
17	1974	26,753	13,517	40,270	82,556	64,731	147,287
18	1975	28,247	14,383	42,630	85,944	56,835	162,766
19	1976	32,214	14,992	47,206	95,504	60,812	173,815
20	1977	33,943	15,123	49,066	92,294	59,958	163,409
21	1978	38,708	15,686	54,394	109,273	65,625	198,404
22	1979	41,850	16,253	58,103	112,140	63,737	204,049
23	1980	44,886	16,673	61,559	121,738	60,298	208,159
24	1981	52,646	16,074	68,720	110,287	60,825	205,188
25	1982	55,349	16,832	72,181	131,779	66,524	223,306
26	1983	58,257	18,995	77,252	135,325	70,601	233,541
27	1984	63,004	19,599	82,603	122,395	73,714	224,030
28	1985	65,301	18,314	83,615	138,845	84,466	264,128
29	1986	67,393	19,464	86,857	137,638	84,739	269,319
30	1987	71,028	19,662	90,690	143,079	94,137	280,310
31	1988	69,160	20,101	89,261	136,994	93,277	270,890
32	1989	---	---	84,868	175,924	103,409	279,431
33	1990	71,640	24,454	96,094	*204,766	114,073	318,839
34	1991	TOTAL BOOKS:	97,030	110,868	*245,550	146,271	391,821
35	1992	TOTAL BOOKS:	104,169	114,626	198,586	157,820	439,276

Graph A-2

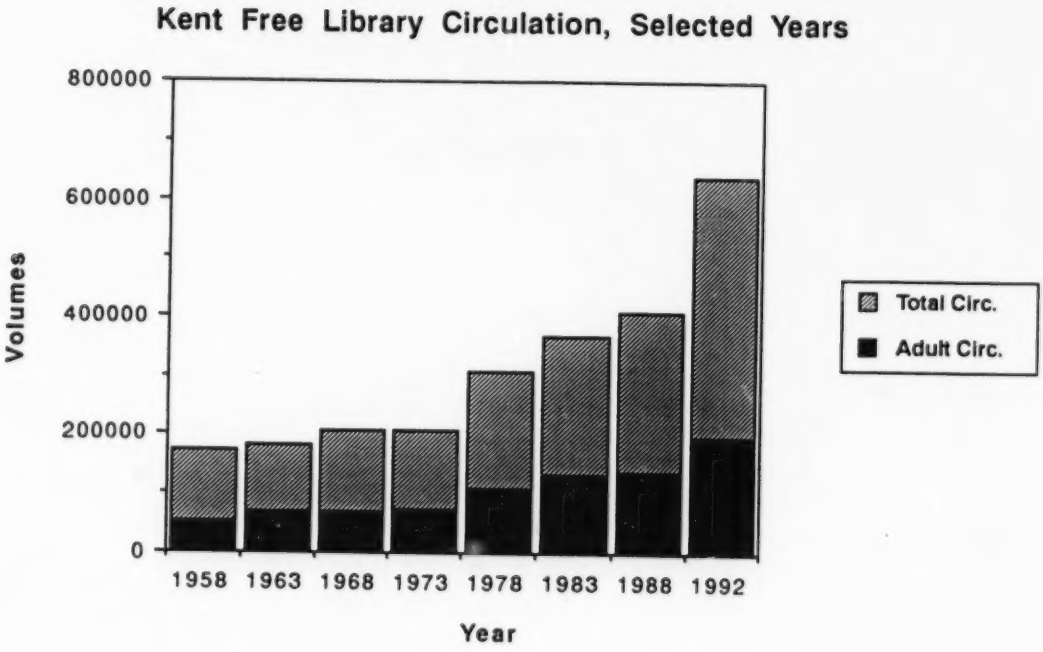
Kent Free Library Circulation, Selected Years
800000
600000
400000
200000
0
Volumes
1958
1963
1968
1973
1978
1983
1988
1992
Year
Total Circ.
Adult Circ.

Table A-3

Budget Figures, 1958-1992

	Year	Tax Income	Fines	Total Income	Personnel	Books	Periodicals	Audiovisual	Total Materials
1	1958	$34692	$2545	$43728	$14389	$4869	$507	$913	$6289
2	1959	$34450	$2847	$40239	$18380	$6005	$563	$1053	$7621
3	1960	$36476	$2932	$41692	$19031	$5477	$580	$1092	$7149
4	1961	$43743	$2549	$47412	$19293	$5601	$570	$1239	$7410
5	1962	$44402	$2609	$49795	$21756	$6453	$522	$798	$7773
6	1963	$43888	$3410	$49128	$22789	$5763	$737	$996	$7496
7	1964	$46918	$3694	$51829	$25270	$7101	$674	$887	$8662
8	1965	$51917	$3534	$56272	$26747	$7288	$764	$810	$8862
9	1966	$54169	$3745	$59259	$32340	$8269	$792	$1155	$10576
10	1967	$63559	$3582	$68639	$34690	$9106	$1306	$1448	$11860
11	1968	$63088	$3667	$69901	$36191	$9275	$384	$1222	$10881
12	1969	$71625	$3870	$78419	$38668	$9620	$403	$956	$10979
13	1970	$74072	---	$81457	$42030	---	---	---	$12664
14	1971	$84705	---	$91800	$43507	---	---	---	$14824
15	1972	$87437	---	$95116	$48492	---	---	---	$16073
16	1973	$99436	---	$107981	$55987	---	---	---	$17028
17	1974	$115032	---	$121128	$62553	---	---	---	$21787
18	1975	$149646	$5553	$161137	$76465	$22134	$1882	$3309	$27325
19	1976	$176014	$5593	$187930	$81606	$25809	$3955	$2796	$32560
20	1977	$195024	---	$200524	$78120	---	---	---	$33065
21	1978	$207092	$9551	$219276	$105607	---	---	---	$53858
22	1979	$229189	$10427	$241498	$116703	---	---	---	$53932
23	1980	$232029	$10533	$245142	$133225	$50439	$7131	$7522	$65092
24	1981	$270289	$10509	$284793	$149050	$38444	$7583	$7776	$53803
25	1982	$290772	$10994	$307848	$167132	$66312	$6847	$15195	$88354
26	1983	$326710	$11929	$344799	$170476	$59884	$8845	$11946	$80675
27	1984	$335704	---	$357539	$186515	---	---	---	$98193
28	1985	$393581	$15722	$506351	$228437	$66781	$11053	$16972	$94806
29	1986	$440245	$16047	$485555	$249244	$72557	$18631	$13927	$105115
30	1987	$584172	$16061	$625904	$296071	$104520	$6601	$14895	$126016
31	1988	$656328	$16175	$696843	$313299	$141034	$14576	$8199	$163809
32	1989	$763336	---	$814575	$337909	---	---	---	$174224
33	1990	$828632	$16212	$877769	$383843	$130117	$6327	$16967	$153411
34	1991	$843072	$24772	$883354	$454502	$122311	$15222	$21212	$158745
35	1992	$779861	$27216	$825784	$414826	$129074	$14916	$25208	$169198

Table A-4

Audiovisual Collection and Circ

	Year	16mm Films	16m Film Circ	Recordings	Record. Circ.	Film Showings	Film Audience	Videos	Video Circ.
1	1958	---	---	1272	6323	1488	71645		
2	1959	8	1527	1097	5126	---	56624		
3	1960	---	---	---	1055	1746	81446		
4	1961	---	---	---	---	1749	13407		
5	1962	9	1967	695	4073	---	87168		
6	1963	7	---	700	3247	---	61517		
7	1964	---	---	---	3277	1126	57886		
8	1965	---	---	762	3365	1264	49811		
9	1966	---	---	679	2976	1432	56710		
10	1967	10	1518	856	2518	---	63767		
11	1968	10	1620	702	3654	---	70514		
12	1969	---	1358	800	3915	2533	120513		
13	1970	10	1048	750	3921	---	93094		
14	1971	10	1212	963	2914	---	116662		
15	1972	10	1167	967	3944	---	111291		
16	1973	10	1058	1099	4566	---	96488		
17	1974	1	729	1300	4886	---	66923		
18	1975	1	1	1145	6744	---	795		
19	1976	2	1072	1571	6698	---	72266		
20	1977	4	655	1726	6184	---	52839		
21	1978	9	432	2549	12066	---	46093		
22	1979	9	792	2973	14029	---	51452		
23	1980	15	687	3018	12491	---	34063		
24	1981	19	667	3272	10511	---	34368		
25	1982	25	520	3202	10158	---	26063	23	318
26	1983	25	493	3506	10523	---	5803	61	1018
27	1984	25	217	3631	9020	---	---	170	1308
28	1985	25	136	4201	12373	---	---	---	---
29	1986	30	104	4427	11870	---	---	729	18289
30	1987	30	82	5160	13671	---	---	928	11724
31	1988	29	42	5136	13573	---	---	1003	8758
32	1989	29	18	5269	13051	---	---	1239	8801
33	1990	29	23	4762	17856	---	---	1588	27440
34	1991	---	---	4786	13259	---	---	1913	31606
35	1992	---	---	---	---	---	---	2431	43698

Table A-5

Portage Cty. Per Capita Tax

Year	Per Capita Tax
1970	2.31
1971	2.50
1972	2.52
1973	2.93
1974	3.15
1975	3.67
1976	4.24
1977	4.56
1978	4.85
1979	5.15
1980	5.39
1981	5.90
1982	6.87
1983	
1984	7.61
1985	8.98
1986	10.45
1987	13.69
1988	15.58
1989	17.65
1990	18.75
1991	18.97
1992	

Table A-6

Registered Borrowers, 1958-1992

Year	Cardholders
1958	7128
1959	---
1960	7405
1961	7830
1962	---
1963	---
1964	---
1965	9622
1966	9541
1967	---
1968	---
1969	---
1970	---
1971	10244
1972	---
1973	---
1974	---
1975	11752
1976	11539
1977	---
1978	---
1979	12615
1980	12927
1981	13067
1982	14012
1983	14301
1984	15886
1985	17050
1986	17321
1987	17537
1988	17369
1989	---
1990	---
1991	12936
1992	18193

School of Library and Information Science
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Fax 216-672-7965

Kent STATE UNIVERSITY
P O Box 5190, Kent, Ohio 44242-0001

CONSENT FORM: A HISTORY OF THE KENT FREE LIBRARY, 1958-1992

I wish to research the history of the Kent Free Library from 1958 to 1992. I want to do so because there is no written history of the library covering this period, and creating one will provide a document for patrons and staff that synthesizes all the existing separate records of the period and shows how the library has grown and improved in this 30+ year period. I would like you to take part in this project. If you decide to do this, you will be asked to answer a few factual questions regarding major events and policies of the Kent Free Library during the years you have been/were connected with it. These interview sessions will last approximately one to two hours, during the last weeks of December or into January if needed. You will be asked questions regarding any matter that cannot be resolved from reading existing records.

There will be no risk to you other than those encountered in everyday life. If you take part in this project you will be helping me to complete the story of the Kent Free Library so that future patrons and friends of the library can read about its development. Taking part in this project is entirely up to you, and no one will hold it against you if you decide not to do it. If you do take part, you may stop at any time. I will not release any information attributed to you without your written consent.

If you want to know more about this research project, please call me at (216) 677-9423, or my adviser Dr. Rick Rubin at (216) 929-1946. This project has been approved by Kent State University. If you have questions about Kent State University's rules for research, please call Dr. Adrian de Vries, (216) 672-2070.

You will get a copy of this consent form.

Sincerely,

Christina Getrost, Graduate Student, Library Science
551 Franklin Ave., Kent, OH 44240-3535

CONSENT STATEMENT:

I agree to take part in this project. I know what I will have to do and that I can stop at any time.

_____ _____

Signature Date